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Special Issue: Well-Being and Public Policy

This special issue of Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly contains papers from a workshop on well-being and public policy held at the University of Manchester in September of 2012. The workshop was inspired in part by a 2010 speech by British Prime Minister David Cameron, who argued that the UK government must aim to measure the progress of the nation “not just by how our economy is growing, but by how our lives are improving; not just by our standard of living, but by our quality of life.” As Sam Wren-Lewis points out in his contribution, the trend toward so-called subjective measures of well-being – which is not unique to the UK – might suggest that the use of such measures for policy purposes is less problematic than it really is. The five papers in this issue explore from different perspectives the challenges and opportunities, advantages and disadvantages, associated with the use of such measures. As the papers illustrate, the debate about the philosophy and public policy of well-being, far from being settled, has only just begun.

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Source: Prime Minister's Office. "PM Speech on Wellbeing," 25 November 2010. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-wellbeing>

Well-being as a Primary Good: Toward Legitimate Well-being Policy

Sam Wren-Lewis

The use of well-being research in assessing and creating public policy is gaining popularity. The UK's Office of National Statistics has developed its National Well-being Index to do exactly that, and several other nations have followed suit. This sway in political will, however, can make the use of well-being research in public policy seem less controversial than it is. Much of the rhetoric around the move toward well-being measures in evaluating policy has centered either on the idea that well-being is what "ultimately matters" or that it is at least "something we all care about." In this essay, I will argue that such claims are illegitimate from the perspective of political liberalism. The former kind of claim is illegitimate insofar as liberal societies should not base policy on comprehensive religious, moral, or philosophical doctrines that many reasonable citizens may not accept. The latter kind of claim is illegitimate insofar as some people care significantly more than others about well-being or the ingredients of well-being. Thus, the use of well-being research to evaluate public policy cannot be justified on either of these grounds.

Does this mean that there are no justifiable grounds for well-being-based policy? Not necessarily. In this essay, I explore the possibility that the psychological aspects of well-being can be viewed as a "primary good." That is, the preservation and promotion of well-being can be justified as instrumentally valuable for most people. Well-being is instrumentally valuable for most people regardless of their particular intrinsic values. In John Rawls's terms, well-being can be viewed as an all-purpose good that people are assumed to want whatever their plans. The reason for this is that the psychological aspects of well-being, the kinds of

things subjective well-being research typically measures, tend to be cognitively and motivationally necessary for agency. Without being able to appreciate one's life emotionally and cognitively, one cannot sufficiently pursue one's own conception of the good. Thus, well-being tends to be necessary for leading a good life regardless of one's conception of in what a good life consists.

Even if it is the case, however, that well-being can be viewed as a primary good in this way, it is not necessarily the case that the state should promote it as a matter of justice. The state should promote only primary goods that share certain important features. First, a given primary good must be distributable and objectively comparable if the state is to promote it in a just manner. In addition, the state must be in the best position to promote a given primary good. That is, the primary good must require institutional support: public policies related to its existence and continuation. Moreover, the primary good must be non-fungible. That is, it must not be commonly obtainable through substitutes – things other than the goods and services provided by the state.

I will argue that the psychological aspects of well-being share each of these features. Thus, according to political liberalism, governments can legitimately provide the social goods necessary for the preservation and promotion of the psychological aspects of well-being. However, I end with a word of caution. The extent to which public policy should promote well-being is not obvious. It may be that only the basic psychological aspects of well-being tend to be necessary for agency. Indeed, it may be that only the absence of the psychological aspects of ill-being (such as chronic depression) is a

primary good. This may make a difference to the kind of policies that governments should enact to preserve and promote well-being.

Well-being and Political Liberalism

Much of the talk about the use of well-being research in public policy has focused on either (a) the general validity or particular implications of well-being research, or (b) the value of well-being and related concepts (such as happiness, life satisfaction, quality of life, and so on). These are all useful discussions to have. But there has been very little talk about the legitimacy of well-being measures and research in public policy.¹ Even if the study of well-being is valid, and well-being is something of value, the promotion of well-being through policy may still not be just.

According to political liberalism, states should not directly promote particular values but rather provide citizens with the necessary means to pursue their own conception of the good. The reason for this is that states should have “respect for persons.” That is, states should treat citizens with respect by treating them as autonomous agents with sovereign authority over their own affairs. As long as the pursuit of one’s own conception of the good does not result in harm to others, it is not the business of the state to judge whether one’s own conception of the good is worthwhile. For the purposes of this paper I will focus solely on the role that well-being policy can take within the framework of political liberalism.^{2, 3}

We may not be able to assume that well-being is something that we all care about, or at least something that we all care about to the same extent.

It does not matter, then, according to political liberalism, whether well-being is ultimately all that matters. Even if philosophical welfarism is true, states should assess and evaluate policy in respect to citizens’ own conceptions of the good. Indeed, even if well-being is merely one of many intrinsic values (along with certain rights and moral, religious, and

aesthetic values, for example) states should not necessarily appeal to these values in forming policy. As long as citizens reasonably disagree over the value or validity of well-being, policy based upon it is illegitimate.

This view tacitly rests on the idea of *value plurality*, namely that citizens reasonably hold a diverse set of (nonharmful) values, none of which should be promoted at the cost of others. However, one could argue that, with well-being, we can assume *value universality*. That is, it may be that well-being is something that we all care about. Who doesn’t care about their own well-being? Indeed, not caring about one’s well-being almost seems paradoxical. Perhaps, then, if everyone cares about his or her own well-being, governments can legitimately promote it. Note that we are not necessarily making any claims about what is in fact valuable. We are merely noting that people do care about well-being. If people care about well-being then perhaps governments should too.

There are two problems with this view, however. First, we may not be able to assume that well-being is something that we all care about, or at least something that we all care about to the same extent. Second, even if we do all care about well-being, there may be considerable variety in the ingredients of well-being. I will briefly consider each problem in turn. Although I am unable to consider each problem in detail here, I aim to show that both problems together at least cast doubt on the legitimacy of well-being policy.

Both problems rest on two lines of evidence regarding reasonable differences in people’s values. First, there are well-documented differences in the kinds of things valued by more “individualist” cultures, on the one hand, and more “collectivist” cultures, on the other (Diener and Suh 2000). Whereas members of more individualist cultures tend to value such things as personal achievement and well-being, members of more collectivist cultures tend to value such things as social cohesion and group harmony. Second, in cases of self-sacrifice, people sacrifice their own well-being in favor of promoting their most important values. For example, parents may sacrifice their own well-being for the sake of looking after their severely disabled child. Similarly, soldiers may sacrifice their well-being (and lives) in order to promote ideals of freedom.

These differences in people's values cast doubt on the legitimacy of the use of well-being as a measure of or criterion for public policy. First, one could argue that they show that not all people care about well-being, or at least that some people care about well-being significantly more than others do. It seems that people with a more collectivist set of values care about well-being less than do those with a more individualist set of values. Indeed, in extreme cases, individual well-being may be so contrary to widely held values that well-being can come to be disvalued. Likewise, it seems that individuals who have sacrificed their own interests value well-being less than do individuals who are largely self-interested. If this were the case, well-being policy would unjustly benefit those who care most about well-being, at the cost of both collectivists and self-sacrificial individuals.⁴

In response to this problem, one could argue that both collectivists and self-sacrificial individuals *do* value their own well-being; only the *ingredients* of their well-being differ. In collectivist cultures, social cohesion and group harmony may be significant ingredients of well-being. In contrast, in individualist cultures, personal achievements may be significant ingredients of well-being. Thus, it may be that all people care about well-being to a similar extent. The differences in values outlined above may merely show that significantly different things cause well-being, not that some people value well-being more than others.

Even if this is the case, however, this simply pushes the problem back a level. Political liberalism holds that citizens reasonably hold a diverse set of values, none of which should be promoted at the cost of others. We can say a similar thing about the ingredients of potentially universal values: a reasonably diverse set of ingredients promotes people's values, none of which should be promoted at the cost of others. For example, well-being policy that promoted personal achievements would unjustly benefit those with a more individualist set of values. Conversely, well-being policy that promoted social cohesion and group harmony would unjustly benefit collectivists. It is unlikely that well-being can be preserved and promoted in the same way, to the same extent, for all citizens.⁵ This failure to find common ground would make such well-being policy illegitimate.

In sum, according to political liberalism, policies

that promote well-being as a value in itself may not be justifiable. Even if well-being has intrinsic value (or indeed is the only thing of intrinsic value), states are not justified in promoting it. Moreover, it is not obvious that all citizens value well-being, or the ingredients of well-being, to the same extent. Thus, well-being policy is likely to advantage some citizens at the expense of others; such policy is illegitimate.

Well-being as a Primary Good

For many people, the discussion stops there. If well-being cannot legitimately be promoted as a value in itself then there is no place for well-being in public policy. This is a mistake. According to political liberalism, states should provide its citizens with certain *primary goods*: all-purpose goods that people are assumed to want whatever their conception of the good. In other words, even if states should not promote particular conceptions of the good, they should still provide most citizens with the means to promote their own conceptions of the good, and well-being can be viewed as a primary good.

*In sum, according to political liberalism,
policies that promote well-being as a value in
itself may not be justifiable.*

To be more precise, the *psychological aspects of well-being* can be viewed as an all-purpose, instrumental good. The psychological aspects of well-being involve the kinds of things that are typically measured by subjective well-being researchers, such as affect balance, life satisfaction, and psychological (or "eudaimonic") well-being. Individuals lacking subjective well-being (SWB) are unable to form and pursue their own conceptions of the good life.⁶

Positive affect is particularly important in this respect. SWB researchers have shown that positive affect has various cognitive and motivational advantages, such as making one more healthy, sociable, creative, confident, optimistic, resilient, and so on (Lyubomirsky et al. 2005). Although these kinds of advantages are important, positive

affect also tends to be advantageous in a more fundamental respect: having a favorable affect balance enables us to appreciate our selves and our lives.

This is perhaps best illustrated by almost the opposite mental condition, namely depression. Depressed individuals, who suffer from an unfavorable affect balance, often lack a sense of self-worth and find no value in any personal activities. They are unable to appreciate the value of themselves and their lives, and thereby lack the motivation to improve their situation. In contrast, individuals with a favorable affect balance often do have a sense of self-worth, and by extension tend to value their own projects, commitments, contributions to relationships, and so on (Hawkins 2010). In short, positive affect enables us to have sufficient *valuing capacities*. Valuing capacities are what enable us to form and pursue our own conception of the good life.^{7, 8}

The state is required to promote only those primary goods that it is in the best position to promote in a just manner.

SWB can be viewed as a primary good in this way. However, not all primary goods should be promoted by the state as a matter of justice. The state is required to promote only those primary goods that it is in the best position to promote in a just manner. Rawls divides primary goods into two classes: social and natural. Social goods include goods that the state can distribute: liberties, opportunities, income, wealth, and the social bases of self-respect. In contrast, natural primary goods include goods whose distribution states can influence but not directly control, such as health. According to political liberalism, only social primary goods are subject to claims of justice.

Social primary goods are subject to claims of justice because they share certain important features. First, the state is able to objectively compare and justly distribute social primary goods. Thus, for SWB to be promoted by the state as a matter of justice, there must be material goods related to SWB that can be *distributed and that are objectively comparable*. It is the *social bases* of SWB that can be promoted by

the state.

In addition, the state is in the best position to promote social primary goods. In the case of SWB, this means that the social bases of SWB must *require institutional support*, that is, public policies related to their existence and continuation. If the social bases of SWB can be more efficiently obtained privately then they should not be promoted by the state. In a related manner, the social bases of SWB must be non-fungible. That is, SWB must not be commonly obtainable through substitutes – things other than the social bases of SWB. If SWB can be efficiently obtained through substitutes, then the state should not promote the social bases of SWB.

In the remainder of this section I will consider whether the psychological aspects of well-being can be viewed as a social primary good and should therefore be promoted by the state as a matter of justice.

Well-being as distributable and objectively comparable

For SWB to be subject to claims of justice, states must be able to distribute and objectively compare it to other material goods. States cannot directly control the distribution of SWB, but they can distribute the social bases of SWB.

What kinds of material and social conditions promote SWB? In general, SWB researchers highlight the importance of such things as intimate relationships, meaningful work and leisure, health, and a sense of control (Diener and Biswas-Diener 2011). There are various social conditions related to each of these kinds of goods. For example, the promotion of meaningful work is partly dependent on jobs that enable workers to make decisions and obtain helpful feedback. We can expect these kinds of social conditions to be important factors in most people's SWB. Moreover, we are in the fortunate position of having a wealth of research into the determinants of SWB, including the kinds of material conditions associated with SWB (Seligman 2011).

Well-being as requiring institutional support

To count as a social primary good, the social bases of SWB must require institutional support, in contrast to being privately obtained. That is, the social and material conditions associated with SWB

must require public policies related to their existence and continuation.

This may not be the case with many of the kinds of social and material conditions that promote SWB. For example, meaningful employment may be best provided by private companies, not by the state. Similarly, a sense of control may require individuals to arrange their lives in certain ways, rather than policies aimed at helping them to do so. I do not want to take a definite stand on the kinds of social conditions that do not require institutional support. It may be, for instance, that education and health care do not necessarily require institutional support, but that the promotion of such goods is best achieved through public policies insofar as they are already publicly supplied. I am unable to consider these sorts of cases here. However, in the remainder of this section I will consider a particular kind of good that does require public policies related to its existence – these are *public goods*.

The psychological aspects of well-being can be viewed as a primary good: an all-purpose good that people need to form and pursue their own conception of the good life.

Public goods typically need state intervention for their existence and continuation. This is because states can resolve the collective-action problems that prevent public goods from being privately obtained. Examples include goods such as national defense, certain types of police services, and various types of insurance. Markets in these kinds of goods will simply be “missing,” in the sense that they will not be provided at all, despite the presence of consumers who would be willing to pay for them and producers who would be willing to provide them. Collective-action problems prevent such markets from existing. The state has the power to “solve” such collective-action problems by imposing taxes or fees, then using the revenue to provide these missing goods.⁹

Various public goods, which are often not provided by the state, may have a large impact on people’s SWB. These include such goods as open green spaces and social settings. Although these

kinds of social conditions can seem fairly trivial at first, evidence suggests that they may in fact have a profound effect on our lives. Consider, for instance, a recent study concerning a low-income housing project in Chicago, whereby residents were assigned to twenty-four almost identical apartment blocks (Frumkin and Louv 2007). The only difference between the apartment blocks was that twelve of them faced some form of vegetation (open green spaces, trees, and so on) whereas the other twelve did not. A follow-up study found that apartment dwellers facing vegetation were significantly: (a) more likely to know their neighbors, socialize, know people within their building, and help each other; (b) less likely to engage in a wide range of aggressive behavior against their partners. This is a large difference made by a very small intervention. In general, we have reason to believe that the public goods that make up the social environment and context in which people spend their lives have a large impact on SWB (Haybron 2011).

Well-being as non-fungible

Lastly, for the social bases of SWB to count as a social primary good, they must be non-fungible. That is, SWB must not be commonly obtainable through substitutes: things other than the social bases of SWB.

One might think that the kinds of social conditions discussed in the previous section are unnecessary if SWB could be promoted merely through the use of certain kinds of mental-health therapies and drugs. This may seem significantly easier and more feasible than building social settings. Of course, it may be that these kinds of mental-health services are still best supplied publicly, rather than privately obtained; I am unable to discuss this issue at length here. We can still ask, however, insofar as such services do not require institutional support, can the social conditions associated with SWB be readily substitutable in this way?

A quick answer would be to say that SWB is not *currently* fungible in this way. That is, despite the efficacy of certain therapies and antidepressants, we have reason to believe that the social conditions discussed above still have a major role to play in the promotion of SWB.

However, it is possible that therapies and drugs will improve in certain ways. Such improvements may make the impact of various social conditions on our SWB largely redundant. If this were the case, the state would not be in the best position to promote SWB through promoting the kinds of social conditions discussed in the previous section. It is possible, therefore, that, sometime in the future, well-being policy would be illegitimate.

Toward Legitimate Well-being Policy

To sum up, the psychological aspects of well-being can be viewed as a primary good: an all-purpose good that people need to form and pursue their own conception of the good life. It is for this reason that states can legitimately promote well-being. In particular, well-being policies should promote public goods associated with SWB. Well-being policy may also promote related goods and services that are publicly funded for other reasons, such as education and mental health.

However, we need to touch upon one further issue in order to understand the extent of legitimate well-being policy. That is, how much SWB is required in order to have sufficient valuing capacities? Is it enough merely to have an absence of various negative psychological conditions, such as depression or an anxiety disorder? If all that is required is a lack of subjective ill-being (SIB), in contrast to a relatively high level of SWB, then extensive well-being policy may not turn out to be legitimate after all.

In response, it is worth saying that this is ultimately an empirical question, and one that should demand further SWB research. Yet we can say one thing in the meantime. That is, promoting SWB may be the most efficient way of preventing SIB in the long-run (Seligman 2011). Whereas preventing SIB may eliminate the immediate stressors in one's life, it does nothing for developing the strengths one needs to deal with potential future setbacks (Fredrickson 2006). Thus, even if states should merely aim to prevent SIB, this may be best achieved through the promotion of SWB. This is, of course, only a speculative suggestion, but one worth considering nonetheless.

In addition, we can say that policies aimed simply at maximizing SWB are likely to be illegitimate in certain circumstances. For example,

it may be that having a relatively high level of SWB is the most efficient way of preventing SIB in the long run, but that having a *very* high level of SWB is not an effective way of preventing SIB. In this case, maximizing people's SWB may not be required in order for them to have sufficient valuing capacities. Rather, policies should aim to promote SWB to the extent that SWB enables people to form and pursue their own conception of the good.¹⁰

Moreover, it is important to stress that, even if it is the case that legitimate well-being policy concerns only the prevention of SIB, this still leaves room for a considerable amount of well-being policy. One recent report found that one-third of all families in the UK include someone who is currently mentally ill (Layard et al. 2012). Policies aimed solely at the prevention of SIB would need, therefore, to consider how best to combat an extensive amount of particular kinds of mental illness. This is not insignificant.

Conclusion

I have argued that well-being policy that aims to promote well-being either as (a) something of value in itself, or (b) something that everyone cares about, is illegitimate. According to political liberalism, even if well-being is ultimately all that matters, states should not promote a particular view of the good life. Moreover, it is not the case that all citizens value well-being, or the ingredients of well-being, to the same extent. Thus, well-being policy would unjustifiably be an advantage to some citizens at the expense of others.

However, an alternative form of well-being policy can be justified. That is, the psychological aspects of well-being (the kind of things measured by SWB researchers) can be viewed as a primary good: an all-purpose instrumental good. In short, legitimate well-being policy enables people to form and pursue their own conception of the good life. In discussing this view, I have suggested that well-being policies should promote public goods associated with SWB. This includes such goods as open green spaces and social settings, and potentially certain forms of education and health care. Lastly, even if well-being policy is required only to alleviate the psychological aspects of ill-being (SIB), an extensive range of well-being policies may still be justified.

Sam Wren-Lewis
samwrenlewis@gmail.com

Notes:

¹ Exceptions include Buhkarat 2006; Frey and Stutzer 2010; and Haybron and Tiberius unpublished.

² I will not be able to argue here that political liberalism is an adequate theory of justice. There are, of course, alternative theories of justice. The Capabilities Approach, for instance, focuses on the provision of universal capabilities in contrast to primary goods (Nussbaum 2000). I will briefly mention in another footnote below how well-being policy could be incorporated into such a framework.

³ I will also not be able to prove here that well-being policy is illegitimate from the point of view of political liberalism. I merely aim to show that, if well-being policy were illegitimate from the perspective of political liberalism (which it may well be), alternative forms of well-being policy (namely, treating well-being as a primary good) may still be legitimate.

⁴ With respect to self-sacrificial individuals, one could argue that well-being policy would not be unjust in this way. This is because such individuals tend to sacrifice their own well-being in favor of promoting the well-being of others. This may not always be the case, however. Consider, for example, environmentalists who sacrifice their own interests in favor of preventing irreversible climate change. Environmentalist may do this for the sake of the planet, not for the well-being of others. Thus, policies aimed at improving their well-being would be unjust, according to political liberalism.

⁵ For example, even common well-being ingredients such as intimate relationships, meaningful work, and leisure time are likely to benefit some individuals more than others.

⁶ From hereon in I will use the terms “subjective well-being” (SWB) and “the psychological aspects of well-being” interchangeably.

⁷ In this sense, the psychological aspects of well-being can be viewed in a similar way to Rawls’s notion of self-respect. Rawls argues that self-respect is necessary in order to form and pursue our own conception of the good life (Rawls 1971). I have no problem with the advantages of SWB being interpreted in this way. This paper can be viewed as an attempt to flesh out the notion of self-respect with respect to one of its ingredients: the psychological aspects of well-being.

⁸ In the development of her version of the Capabilities Approach, Nussbaum also emphasizes the importance of valuing capacities, referring to practical reason as one of the fundamental central capabilities (Nussbaum 2000). Thus, SWB has a similarly important role to play in alternative views of distributive justice, the Capabilities Approach in particular.

⁹ The state may also be required to solve collection-action problems related to the over-consumption of various positional goods (see, for instance, Layard 2005; Frank 2011). Positional goods involve zero-sum games, which have a tendency to escalate. For example, arms races occur because each side wants more arms than the other side. The absolute number of arms possessed by either side does not matter; all that matters is the relative number of arms that each side has, that is, whether one side has more arms than the other. The result is that both sides tend to “over-consume” on arms. External interventions are often necessary to prevent such competitions from escalating in this way. Frank 2000 has argued that similar “arms races” abound with respect to our consumption of various positional goods. He further argues that state intervention may also be required to prevent such over-consumption. Over-consumption of positional goods ultimately prevents the consumption of other goods associated with SWB (such as quality relationships, leisure time, and so on). It may be that certain taxes, therefore, can act as disincentives for the promotion of various positional goods. This is more controversial than the role played by other public goods in the promotion of SWB. Yet it is a striking example of how institutional support may be required to promote the kind of social conditions related to SWB.

¹⁰ With regard to promoting public goods, such as open green spaces and social settings, this would mean that states should provide such goods in areas where people have low levels of SWB (typically deprived areas) rather than high levels of SWB (typically affluent areas).

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Well-being and Prudential Value

Tim E. Taylor

When we talk about well-being we often also talk about what is “good for” a person. The fact that we use the term “good” suggests that there is a kind of value here. Philosophers tend to call this “prudential value” to distinguish it from value of other kinds, such as aesthetic value or moral value. Surprisingly little attention is given in the philosophical literature to the relationship between prudential value and well-being. Often, they are simply regarded as synonyms (in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, for example [Crisp 2008]). In this paper I shall argue that it is useful to make a distinction between these two separate, but closely related, notions and that a recognition of this distinction, and an increased focus upon prudential value in certain circumstances, would be beneficial in the context of public policy.

The Distinction

When we say that a person has a high level of well-being, we tend to mean that his life is going well for him overall. In some cases a judgment about well-being may concern a person’s whole life, but it is more usual to talk about somebody’s well-being at a particular time. Sometimes we talk about specific kinds of well-being, such as psychological or social well-being. In these cases we are concerned with how well a person’s life is going in a particular respect, rather than on the whole. Nevertheless, a judgment about someone’s level of psychological or social well-being is still a judgment about how well his life is going overall in that respect.

By contrast, when we talk about prudential value, we do not necessarily make any overall evaluation of a person’s life. We may, of course, talk about the prudential value of a person’s life itself – whether it

is a good life for that person. But lives are by no means the only things that we evaluate in this way. We talk about all sorts of things, including objects, people, events, and states of affairs as being good or bad for people.

When we talk about something’s being good for a person, we mean that this thing makes, or tends to make, that person’s life go better for her. But making such a judgment does not imply any judgment about how well her life is going overall. Indeed, the judgment that something is good for some person is entirely consistent with a judgment that the person’s life is going badly overall. Thus, for example, when a condemned man eats his favorite meal on the eve of his execution, it is plausible that in some small way his enjoyment of the meal is good for him: it makes his life go a little bit better for him than it would have gone otherwise. Nevertheless, this is consistent with the fact that overall his life is going very badly indeed. We might say that the meal has positive prudential value for him, but that his level of well-being is very low. We can sum up the distinction by saying that well-being is what someone has if her life is going well for her; whereas something has prudential value for someone if it contributes to making her life go well.

Some Points about Prudential Value

Prudential value is a kind of value alongside other kinds, such as aesthetic value. It has a particular property that helps distinguish it from other kinds of value. Prudential value is always relative to a person or other welfare subject: something that has this kind of value is good for someone (or something). Other kinds of value aren’t usually seen as having this kind of relativity: things are

good simpliciter, not good for someone (although there are philosophical views that hold that certain kinds of value may be relative in a different way: to a certain cultural context or sensibility).

Prudential value also has certain properties that it shares with some other kinds of value. It can be positive or negative: things can be good for someone or bad for someone. “Bad,” in this context, does not mean merely “not very good,” but is the opposite of good: “bad for” is to “good for” as “concave” is to “convex,” not as “big” is to “small.” This property of being bipolar seems to be shared with moral value, for example – moral badness also seems to be the opposite of moral goodness. Note, however, that this is not true of all kinds of value: a bad saw does seem to be a saw that is not very good (at cutting wood), rather than the opposite of a good saw (which would perhaps be something that stitched wood back together).

The judgment that something is good for some person is entirely consistent with a judgment that the person's life is going badly overall.

Prudential value can also be intrinsic or instrumental (some philosophers, influenced by G. E. Moore [Moore 1903/1983], prefer to use the term “final” in opposition to “instrumental” and restrict the term “intrinsic value” to what has value in virtue of its intrinsic properties). Things can be good or bad for someone either in their own right, or indirectly, because they lead to other things that are good/bad for the person in their own right. Thus, for example, the achievement of some goal might have intrinsic prudential value for a person – it is something that makes his life go better in its own right. Something like a training course, on the other hand, might have instrumental prudential value: though it is not something that in itself would directly improve a person's life (it is hard work and rather tedious), it does so indirectly by giving him skills he needs to achieve certain goals whose accomplishment does make his life go better.

We can also distinguish between actual and potential prudential value. Something has potential prudential value if it is the sort of thing that makes, or is likely to make, someone's life go better. Thus,

for example, we might say “regular exercise is good for us,” meaning that exercising regularly tends to improve people's well-being. Something has actual prudential value if it actually has an impact upon someone's life. Thus we might say “the regular exercise she does is good for her” meaning that her exercising regularly in fact has a positive effect on her life. Potential prudential value could be general or specific. Something with general potential prudential value is something that tends to be good for human beings in general; something with specific prudential value would be good for a particular person at a particular time if that person were to have it (or – if it is an event or state of affairs – if it were to occur or obtain) at that time. My interest in this paper is exclusively on actual rather than potential prudential value.

Prudential Value and Well-being

A rough analogy may help to illustrate these different kinds of prudential value and how they relate to well-being. We can regard well-being as loosely analogous to bodily health: well-being is a yardstick of the overall quality of someone's life just as health is a yardstick of her overall physical functioning. On this model, something that has intrinsic prudential value, positive or negative, is roughly analogous to something that in itself means that her health is good or bad in some respect, such as normal lung function (positive) or an irregular heartbeat (negative). Positive and negative instrumental prudential value would be roughly analogous to the properties of being beneficial or injurious to health. And the fact that we talk about both actual and potential prudential value has a parallel in the fact that we can talk both in general terms about normal lung function, say, as something that is part of being healthy, and specifically about a person's (actual) normal lung function as meaning that she is in fact healthy in this respect.

Making a distinction between well-being and prudential value should not mask the close connection between the two terms. They are not independent of each other, and can be seen as two sides of the same coin. Something that has positive (actual) prudential value for someone is something that contributes positively towards that person's well-being; something that has negative prudential

value is something that decreases well-being. We can thus translate statements about prudential value into statements about well-being, as follows:

X has positive (negative) prudential value for S

is equivalent to

X increases (decreases) S's well-being.

Conversely, we would expect that a person who enjoys a high level of well-being will be a person whose life contains more positive than negative prudential value. In this context, note that it is only intrinsic prudential value that counts. To include the instrumental prudential value that some things have by virtue of bringing about other things that have intrinsic prudential value would be double-counting.

Top-down and Bottom-up Approaches

If well-being and prudential value are two sides of the same coin, then it does not seem reasonable that they should be defined independently of each other. We should be able to define one of them in terms of the other. This could in principle be done either way round, depending upon which notion is seen as logically prior to the other. It is also conceivable that neither term is logically prior – that each can be defined in terms of the other. However, in developing a theory of well-being and prudential value, we would need to take one or the other of these terms as our starting point.

On the one hand, we could adopt a top-down approach, beginning with a definition of well-being, and defining positive and negative prudential value in terms of whatever contributes to, or detracts from, that. Alternatively, we could adopt a bottom-up approach, defining prudential value first, and then defining well-being in terms of the balance between positive and negative prudential value. The bottom-up approach has an obvious kinship with “atomism” about well-being: the view that the value of a life is determined by that of its valuable components, or “value atoms,” as Ben Bradley calls them (Bradley 2009). The parallel between the opposing view, holism, and the top-down approach is less close. Holists believe that how well someone’s life goes has to be seen in terms of the

life as a whole, and is not determined by the subject’s well-being at particular times (in particular, it may be influenced by the overall shape of the life, as David Velleman has argued [Velleman 1991]). The top-down approach is not committed to this: one could hold a top-down theory of well-being while maintaining that how well a life goes is determined by the subject’s well-being at particular times.

Most of the mainstream accounts of well-being appear to follow the bottom-up structure. Hedonism, for example, identifies a good, pleasure, and defines well-being in terms of the amount of this good (and its opposite, pain) that a person’s life contains. Most (but not all – see below) desire-satisfaction theories also seem to be bottom-up in structure. What matters for well-being is the satisfaction of desires or preferences, and a person’s life goes well to the extent that her various desires – or, on different variants of the theory, her informed desires, or the desires that an ideally rational version of herself would have for her – are satisfied.

We would expect that a person who enjoys a high level of well-being will be a person whose life contains more positive than negative prudential value.

Note that on neither approach is it necessarily the case that a verdict on well-being may be derived simply by adding up pleasures or satisfied desires and subtracting pains or unsatisfied desires (though this may be true of certain versions). For example, John Stuart Mill’s version of hedonism, with its insistence on a distinction between “higher” and “lower” pleasures, would treat the former as more valuable than the latter, even if the amount of pleasure is the same (Mill 1993). Similarly, some desire-satisfaction theories reject the “summative” view that the greater the number of satisfied desires the better, and give priority to certain kinds of desires. Nevertheless, the fact that the way in which individual pleasures or satisfied desires contribute toward well-being may be fairly complex does not alter the fact that these approaches are bottom-up in

structure. Their verdicts on well-being are ultimately determined by facts about good and bad mental states or states of affairs, even if this is not a matter of simple addition and subtraction.

Objective-list theories of well-being, and objective versions of the “capabilities” approach, which sees well-being in terms of capabilities to be and do certain things, also seem to be bottom-up in structure. They specify various prudential goods (or capabilities), and regard a person’s life as going well to the extent that the person possesses them. As in the case of hedonism and desire-satisfaction theories, it may not be the case that one can reach verdicts on well-being simply by adding up the goods. On some theories, for example, a person would need to possess all of the goods/capabilities to at least some degree to be regarded as having a good life (this seems to be true of Martha Nussbaum’s list [Nussbaum 1999]). Again, however, this does not change the fact that well-being is defined in terms of the possession of goods (that is, things that have prudential value for human beings) rather than in terms of a prior notion of what it is for something to be good for someone.

A notable exception to this pattern is the group of theories, to which we can give the general label “life-satisfaction theories,” that define well-being in terms of a person’s overall attitude to his life. A prominent example of this approach is Wayne Sumner’s theory (Sumner 1996), which defines well-being in terms of “authentic happiness,” with happiness in turn being defined in terms of a person’s evaluation of and affective response to his life (with certain “authenticity” conditions that need to be met for a person’s verdict on her life to be regarded as authoritative). John Rawls also seems to have favored a top-down approach to well-being: he argues that whether something accords with a person’s good depends upon how well it fits the plan of life that would be chosen by that person with deliberative rationality (Rawls 1999). A more recent example of a top-down approach is Jason Raibley’s “well-being as agential flourishing” (Raibley 2012) which says that a person is doing well to the extent that she resembles the paradigm case of a flourishing agent.

Other possible top-down approaches are variants of the desire-satisfaction approach that rank the possible lives a person might lead on the basis of the person’s actual or idealized desires about those

lives. Chris Heathwood has given these approaches the labels “Life Preferentism” and “Idealized Life Preferentism” respectively (Heathwood 2011). One could also envisage an objective theory that specified not components of a good life, which might realize well-being in various combinations, but rather an overall pattern of life that was seen as the best for human beings, with actual lives judged by how closely they approximate to this ideal. The Aristotelian “perfectionism” espoused by Thomas Hurka has this structure (though arguably it is not strictly a theory of well-being [Hurka 2003]).

It is important to note that it is not only those who adopt a top-down approach to defining well-being who are interested in top-down measures of well-being, such as life-satisfaction. Top-down measures offer obvious practical advantages: they rely on a single datum, which promises a clear and straightforward verdict on how well a person’s life is going. By contrast, the bottom-up approach in principle requires many individual elements to be considered and assessed to deliver a verdict on well-being. Someone who defines well-being in a bottom-up way, in terms of, say, the overall balance between pleasures and pains or satisfied and unsatisfied desires, might nevertheless believe that global attitudes such as life-satisfaction provide good evidence of where that balance lies, and perhaps can even be a reasonable proxy for well-being – no doubt with caveats. The idea would be that, in making a judgment on how satisfied she is with her life, a person is likely to be influenced, consciously or subconsciously, by the extent to which her important desires are being satisfied and/or the extent to which she experiences pleasure and displeasure with the circumstances of her life. Thus, if the subject’s life-satisfaction reports (or other top-down appraisals of her life) are reflective and not distorted by extraneous factors, they should provide a reasonable approximation of the verdict that a bottom-up appraisal of her life would deliver. We should note however, that this may be quite a big “if”: Daniel Kahneman, Norbert Schwarz, Dan Haybron and others have identified various factors that may distort subject reports (Schwarz and Strack 1999; Kahneman and Krueger 2006; Haybron 2007).

Policy Implications

What are the implications for public policy of the

distinction between prudential value and well-being? It is relevant, I suggest, in the context of the increasing adoption of well-being as a policy goal, or as a yardstick against which policies may be assessed, by governments (such as that of the UK) and international organizations. This has led to a recognition that well-being needs to be measured and to the development of national and international measurement programs. I argue that such programs would provide more complete information in support of public policy aims if the distinction were more widely recognized, and if there were a willingness to focus specifically on prudential value in certain circumstances. This claim is not theory-neutral: its force depends to some extent upon whether one adopts theories of – or assumptions about – well-being and prudential value that are at least partly bottom-up rather than top-down, and at least partly subjective rather than objective.

Prudential Value Can be Measured

The first point to make in support of this contention is that prudential value is something that can be measured. It can be measured indirectly, of course, because statements about prudential value can be translated into statements about increases or decreases in well-being. We can measure well-being before and after some event, or with and without some factor under consideration, and make inferences about whether that event had, or that factor has, a positive or negative impact on well-being and therefore positive or negative prudential value.

But in principle we could also measure prudential value more directly by asking questions of the individual welfare subject, at least on certain theories. These theories are those that are a) bottom-up rather than top-down in structure and b) broadly subjective, in that they give a central role to the subject's attitudes or mental states in determining what is good for her. In this sense, hedonism, desire-satisfaction theories, and life-satisfaction theories all count as subjective theories (though life-satisfaction theories are top-down). Those responsible for developing national programs of measurement (such as the Office of National Statistics in the UK) sometimes adopt broadly-based assumptions about well-being,

which include both top-down and bottom-up, and objective and subjective, elements rather than endorse particular philosophical theories. This inclusive approach also gives some scope for the direct measurement of prudential value, if it includes elements that are both bottom-up and subjective.

Since top-down theories would define prudential value (if they recognize it at all) in terms of a prior theory of well-being, it seems likely that they would only allow prudential value to be measured indirectly, as discussed at the start of this section. It is also unclear how intrinsic prudential value would be measured directly on an objective theory. The instrumental prudential value of policies (and so on) could be measured by identifying how much of the stipulated objective goods (or whatever) they produce, but objective theories tend not to offer any basis, other than stipulation, on which to assess the value of these goods themselves (that is a major weakness of these theories, in my view).

Measuring prudential value directly would pose certain challenges. In particular, the meaning of the term “prudential value” itself, and the distinction between prudential value and well-being, may not be readily understood. However, in order to obtain responses that might shed light on prudential value, it would not be necessary to use the term explicitly in framing questions. There are other forms of words that could be used that are more familiar in everyday speech, such as “is X a good thing in your life?”

The use of everyday language would not, of course, eliminate all methodological issues. It would be important to frame the questions, and their contexts, carefully in order to elicit responses relevant to prudential value. Care would also need to be taken to ensure that responses were not affected by extraneous factors. Similar issues apply to all methodologies that rely on subject reports. If we are prepared to place reliance on people's judgments about how happy they are, and how satisfied they are with their lives, it does not seem unreasonable that we might also be prepared to place some reliance upon their judgment about whether some event, or some factor, is good or bad for them. This is not to say that we should necessarily take people to be infallible witnesses of what is good or bad for them. People can be wrong about this. Nevertheless, they are surely witnesses

who deserve to be given a certain *prima facie* credibility.

This is particularly so when we are asking people about what has intrinsic prudential value for them. This is surely a matter on which the subject should be regarded as a privileged – though not infallible – witness. Indeed, there are reasons to think that people's answers to this type of question might potentially be more reliable than, say, judgments of life-satisfaction. Judgments about intrinsic prudential value are narrower in focus – and therefore, I suggest, less subject to cognitive error: they do not require subjects to assess their lives as a whole but merely to focus upon the value of some particular event or factor. They may also be less subject to distortion by factors such as expectation, since they do not require subjects to judge things against some standard (which itself may be affected by extraneous factors) of what is acceptable. There is more reason for caution regarding self-assessments that include instrumental prudential value. Perhaps we should not assume that people are always good at assessing and balancing the indirect impacts that things may have on their lives. Nevertheless, these assessments too may be of some value, with appropriate caveats.

Reasons for Measuring Prudential Value

Why would we want to examine, and measure, prudential value as well as, or instead of, well-being? I suggest that there are two sorts of contexts in which this would be beneficial. The first context is found in cases where governments, or other bodies, wish to identify the positive or negative impact of various factors or events, such as ill-health unemployment, upon people's lives. That is, in essence, a question about the prudential value of those things. It can be translated into a question about well-being, by virtue of the fact that statements about prudential value can be translated into statements about increases or decreases in well-being. This type of question already receives attention, of course, and it tends to be addressed through the "before/after" or "with/without" type of question discussed at the start of the previous section. So prudential value is already measured indirectly in these cases. My suggestion is that there would also be merit in measuring it more directly, by asking people whether they regard these factors

or events as having positive or negative value in their lives. I am not suggesting that indirect measurement of prudential value via well-being should cease, just that there might be benefit in employing both methods in parallel.

A second, and arguably more important, context in which to look at prudential value has to do with more fundamental questions that lie at the heart of the whole subject of what makes human lives go well: the questions regarding what are the things that have the most impact upon how well people's lives go, and what is their relative impact. Again, these are fundamentally questions about prudential value, though as before, they can be translated into questions about well-being.

The question of what are the things that have the most impact upon how well people's lives go ... is fundamentally a question about prudential value.

These questions do receive attention, but where attempts are made through well-being research to answer them, this is generally done indirectly, by using statistical techniques to establish correlations among various candidate components or domains of well-being – such as personal relationships, autonomy, and the like – and overall well-being. I do not wish by any means to deny the value of this work, or to suggest that it should not be done, but there are certain limitations inherent in this indirect method. In particular, though it may be possible to make generalizations about groups of people by such means, statistics may mask differences between individuals. It may be that, for example, personal relationships are of paramount importance for one person, and autonomy is paramount for another. Also, statistical correlations may not reveal the nature of the relationship between well-being and other factors – it might be, for example that some feature is usually possessed by people who have high well-being, without itself being something that increases well-being (has prudential value).

It seems to me, therefore, that in addition to measuring correlations with well-being, there would be merit in research targeted more directly at prudential value. This might take the form, for example, of inviting subjects to consider what are

the things, or types of things, that most matter in their lives. This could either be open-ended, or subjects could be asked to rate the relative importance to them of various specified well-being domains. Both options have advantages and disadvantages – it might be more difficult for open-ended questioning to induce the subject to consider all the relevant conditions of their lives; on the other hand, a list of domains might exclude things that are important to some individuals.

The information that such value-focused measures might provide could be beneficial in two ways. First, by allowing weighting of different domains or goods, these measures would allow differences between individuals to be taken into account, thus providing a more nuanced and accurate picture of well-being (weighting is already a feature of some surveys). Second, to the extent these measures facilitated the drawing of more general conclusions about the positive or negative value that goods, factors, or domains have in people's lives, this would help policy-makers who acknowledge a role for well-being considerations to make judgments about priorities. To give a hypothetical example, if people with access to public libraries consistently rated this as having considerable value in their lives, that would be relevant to considerations about library funding.

As I conceded at the start of this section, the claims that underlie my proposal are not theory-neutral: they may have less force for those who favor wholly top-down or wholly objective theories of well-being. Nevertheless, I believe that they hold good for a wide spectrum of mainstream opinion on this subject. The methodological challenges that would arise in attempting to measure prudential value directly should not be underestimated, but they do not seem insuperable. What I am proposing is a shift in emphasis rather than a radical change to methodologies for measuring well-being. Nevertheless, I believe that such a shift, which would be facilitated by a recognition of the distinction between prudential value and well-being, would be beneficial in filling out and sharpening the picture that empirical research can paint of what affects the quality of people's lives, with consequent benefits for the shaping of public policy.

Tim E. Taylor
phltet@leeds.ac.uk

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Happy Now? Well-being and Cultural Policy

Kate Oakley, Dave O'Brien, and David Lee

Although much of the debate in UK policy circles has been on the definition and measurement of well-being, there have been as yet relatively few attempts to apply a well-being lens to specific policy areas. One partial exception has been cultural policy.

In 2010 the Culture and Sport Evidence Programme (CASE) reported on a three-year research project into the drivers and impacts of participation in sports and cultural activity. CASE was a major programme within the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the UK's ministry of culture. A key strand of the programme was to understand and assess the benefits of cultural engagement. The project assessed in terms of subjective well-being the value to the individual of participation in sports and engagement in cultural activity (CASE 2010, 5).

In a policy area often criticized for its lack of investment in research and evidence-gathering, the size of the programme alone – £1.8m for an effort that brought together all the main cultural policy organizations in the UK – could be taken as a sign that the “well-being agenda” held out some promise for cultural policy-makers.

Indeed, it could be argued that cultural activities, with their associations of conviviality, “flow-like” engagement (Csikszentmihályi 1992), and attention to questions of both meaning and belonging, offer fertile ground for policy engagement with well-being. Yet despite the rather startling finding that a visit to the cinema once a week had an income compensation value of £9,000 per household per year (CASE 2010), developing a well-being-inflected cultural policy is proving quite problematic.

Although debates about culture and the good life are of ancient lineage, our concern is with the UK policy regime of the last fifteen years or so, first under the New Labour government (1997–2010) and later under the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition. This corresponds with the growth of well-being as a policy discourse, both in the UK and internationally. Given that, we use the term “well-being” as is commonly done in policy circles to refer to a combination of subjective well-being with more eudemonic measures, although we recognize that these definitions are both contested and confused.

Although we understand “culture” in a broad sense to include the arts (visual and performing arts, music, literature, and so on), the media (film, TV, radio, videogames, and other social media), heritage (museums, built and natural heritage), and sport, the focus of this paper will be largely on “cultural policy” as it concerns the arts and heritage.

The link between participation in sports and well-being is reasonably well-demonstrated (Scully et al. 1998; Chatzisarantis and Hagger 2007), whereas media use is more often associated with debates about its role as a source of ill-being and a variety of moral panics (Kraut et al. 1998). Media policy-makers may legitimately wish to stress the well-being benefits of media participation, and in the case of film they sometimes do (DCMS 2012), but theirs is often a rear-guard action against the suggestion that media use is often harmful, particularly for children (Livingstone and Haddon 2009).

In the arts, however, the struggle for legitimacy, and hence the call for public spending, is generally stronger, and the use of instrumentalist arguments

for advocacy purposes is more fully developed. The arts have thus been the focus – along with heritage – of well-being-influenced policy discourse.

New Labour's Cultural Policy: The Emergence of Well-being

Until recently, the engagement of cultural policy with ideas about well-being in the UK has been primarily of two sorts: encouraging arts and creative activities as a part of education, and using arts therapy as treatment for ill-being of various sorts.

The latter form has perhaps the longest history: from the therapeutic benefits accorded to visual expression for sufferers of schizophrenia and other forms of psychosis, to the use of art as a form of therapy for depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses (Staricoff 2004; Heenan 2006). Although well-being in its current policy incarnation is influenced primarily by the ideology of positive psychology (Seligman 2002), and therefore by the argument that focusing on mental “illness” is in fact part of the problem with psychology, art therapy (which includes dance, drama, and music as well as painting and sculpture) remains a core element of the case that is made for the well-being benefits of cultural participation.

A perennial issue is that well-being is itself instrumentalized in these initiatives – treated as a way to improve pupil engagement and hence exam results – rather than an end in itself.

Similarly, the case for an “arts-rich” educational curriculum has for some time stressed the potential of cultural activities in school for developing the characteristics or attitudes associated with well-being, from communication skills to self-esteem and confidence (Bamford 2006). Much of this currently goes under the more fashionable description of “creative learning,” which unhelpfully blurs the distinction between creativity as associated with the arts and culture and a more general notion of creativity as “new ideas” (Oakley 2009).

Such ideas were pervasive under the New Labour government, influenced as it was by knowledge-economy rhetoric, which stressed the

need for a more innovative workforce as the way for a country such as the UK to avoid a low-wage solution to its economic ills (Garnham 1990; Reich 1993). An influential report published in the late 1990s, *All Our Futures* (Robinson 1999), argued for the need to introduce more “creativity” into the school curriculum in order to develop a generation of young people able to participate in global markets, feed the (then) fast-growing creative industries, and adapt to technological and social change.

The Creative Partnerships initiative, which followed this report, ran from 2002 to 2011 in a large number of schools across England. Cultural practitioners – from DJs to architects – were to be brought into schools to work with pupils on a variety of extra-curricular projects. As is characteristic of instrumental policies, the stated aim of Creative Partnerships shifted at various times, and while never losing its overriding economic rationale, switched from an initial focus on improving educational outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, to a broader set of outcomes, including those associated with well-being.

A recent review of such initiatives (McLellan et al. 2012) suggests that although Creative Partnerships was not explicitly focused on promoting well-being as an outcome of its activities, some of its effects could be seen as promoting an environment conducive to improved pupil well-being. These included: supporting cooperative activity in schools (in contrast to the more competitive school ethos encouraged elsewhere in educational policy); giving young people a greater voice in school decision-making; and strengthening pupil autonomy via more exploratory pedagogical methods.

As might be expected, the evaluation of initiatives such as Creative Partnerships tends to find mixed results (McLellan et al. 2012). Common findings are that pupils’ confidence and self-esteem are improved, with the implication that this improves efficacy and sense of well-being. But the questions of what well-being is for and how it valued vis à vis other policy goals are also raised by this research. A perennial issue is that well-being is itself instrumentalized in these initiatives – treated as a way to improve pupil engagement and hence exam results rather than an end in itself. Perhaps as a consequence of this, well-being gains tend to

decline throughout a pupil's schooling, as emphasis on exam results and hence performance pressure increase.

Well-being and culture had been linked in adjoining fields for some time via art therapy and education. But the middle of the New Labour period (2004 onwards) saw well-being take a more central role, as concerns about the direction of cultural policy became more pronounced. The bundling of a variety of cultural practices – from architecture to videogames – into the “creative industries” was used to set them within a policy narrative stressing their importance to the economic future of the UK and elsewhere (UNCTAD 2010). What was seen as the dominance of economic logics was accompanied by social instrumentalism, which sought to use arts policy to address a variety of social-policy issues from crime to unemployment. This could be characterized as the residual social-democratic strand to New Labour's otherwise neoliberal economic policies (Hall 2003), or, more accurately perhaps, as an example of what some scholars have called “after” neoliberalism (Larner and Craig 2005), where state agencies try to distance themselves from the more market-oriented approaches of their predecessors while seeking to ensure some social amelioration, and to provide a check on the most damaging outcomes of market forms of governance. New Labour's cultural policies consistently displayed such an attempted balancing act, and although we would argue that its social aims were often undercut by its economic policies, even in the cultural industries (Oakley 2011), the government was also criticized for the social instrumentalism of its cultural policy (Holden 2004; Mirza 2006).

In response, Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture between 2001 and 2007 (under some direct pressure from leading arts world figures such as conductor Simon Rattle and playwright David Hare) published a “personal essay”: *Government and the Value of Culture* (Jowell 2004). This sought to restate the legitimacy of public funding for culture in terms beyond both economic growth and social instrumentalism. The essay instead drew on thinkers like John Ruskin to describe culture as part of the good life, offering “personal happiness and fulfilment” (Ruskin 1860/1985; Jowell 2004, 8) and even arguing for an escape from measurement, from the “evidence-based policy making” so dear to New

Labour (Oakley 2008).

“When we undertake policies... we might engage focus groups or undertake market research to tell us what the view of people is. In terms of the intrinsic value of culture, the lives of citizens, I'm not sure we need it,” she claimed boldly (Jowell 2004, 13), but although the essay was well received in some quarters, its immediate policy influence was limited. In a political culture characterized by managerialism (Bevir and Rhodes 2003) and in a policy department that was weak and seen as lacking in “evidence” to support its policies, claims for the ineffable quality of the arts would always be viewed suspiciously in some quarters. Any purported link between culture and increased well-being would have to be empirically demonstrable.

Making the CASE

Although Jowell's essay was seen by some as the start of a backlash against New Labour's “targetolatry” (Davey 2012), whether we “needed” it or not, the cultural ministry was still expected to make the case for public spending in terms commensurate with other government departments (Belfiore 2004). It is perhaps not surprising therefore that the most prominent use of the concepts and tools associated with developing well-being in cultural policy was a research programme, CASE, designed to provide measurement of any purported link between culture and well-being.

In the case of CASE, well-being is a technical tool that provides evidence of the costs and benefits of interventions for cost-benefit analysis.

The programme was grounded in a fundamental policy aim under New Labour to increase levels of participation in government-funded cultural activity (Miles and Sullivan 2010). Understanding why people engaged in cultural activity (drivers), what the results of that engagement might be (impacts), and finding a way to place a value on that experience, in language understood by the Finance Ministry (values), formed the basis for DCMS's use of ideas associated with well-being.

Well-being was central to the discussion of the

“values” part of CASE, as it was seen as a way to bridge the gap between criticisms of the reduction of cultural activity to economic value(s) and the demands of the Finance Ministry for cost-benefit analysis (CASE 2010). CASE adopted the emerging technique of using well-being measurement data, drawn from the Office for National Statistics’ British Household Panel Survey (CASE 2010), and those data’s relationship with income, to develop prices for cultural activities that could fit within the Finance Ministry’s model of policy-appraisal and evaluation. Individuals were asked to estimate their well-being on a numeric scale, and then valuations were derived by a two-stage process. In the first instance, data were analyzed to understand the impact of an event or activity on well-being and then, second, this information was used to estimate the amount of income that would be required to achieve the same change in well-being based on the relationship between income and well-being. This technique is known as income compensation. When used by CASE (CASE 2010, 34) the relationship between well-being and income was used to derive prices for cultural engagement including:

- Participating in sports at least once a week has an income compensation value of £11,000 per household, per year.
- Going to a cinema at least once a week has an income compensation value of £9,000 per household, per year.
- Going to a concert at least once a week has an income compensation value of £9,000 per household, per year.

However, these figures proved difficult to adapt to media and public discussions of cultural policy, based both on what seemed, on first reading, as high values (as the caveat of per household per year was often obscured) and the inherent difficulty of explaining the method that provided the figures.

The result of this use of well-being data is that, rather than suggesting a commitment to those versions of well-being associated with improving national happiness, well-being fit quite neatly into the existing, market-failure-led framework that has come to dominate the professionalized policy-making process within Whitehall (O’Brien 2012). Well-being data strongly suggest that interventionism may be appropriate in certain policy areas, for example, to encourage full

employment, based on the very strong relationship between unemployment and lower levels of well-being (Davies 2011). However, this type of approach is, without question, not on the current agenda of either major political party in the UK.

In the case of CASE, well-being is a technical tool that provides evidence of the costs and benefits of interventions for cost-benefit analysis. This is, of course, part of a wider mode of neoliberal policy-making that seeks to disguise political decision-making under a seemingly neutral managerial framework (the development of evidence-based policy-making; the rise of audit culture within public institutions; and the use of numerical and statistical data for policy making) with politics presented not as a set of conflicting interests but as a sort of nonpolitics (Duggan 2003).

But this use of well-being data was also an expression of the relative weakness of DCMS as a policy-making department. Having been set up by New Labour when it took office in 1997, DCMS continued the consolidation of policy responsibly around culture, the media, and sports (as well as gambling), begun by its predecessor, the Department of National Heritage. As the new name suggests, DCMS was to symbolize New Labour’s desire to associate itself with the modern and forward-looking. In developing its idea of the “creative industries,” which bring together a variety of cultural practices and economic models, DCMS sought to establish a position for itself, if not at the heart of economic policy-making, then at least as a player on the active fringes. Yet despite this, and perhaps because the creative industries idea itself was often seen as either opportunistic or incoherent, the cultural ministry remained marginal in policy-making terms.

The managerial nature of public policy-making at the time took several forms, including the use of inspections and reviews for individual ministries within central government. DCMS was the subject of particular scrutiny from the 2007 onwards, when a “Capability Review” carried out by fellow civil servants in central government was critical of DCMS’s performance, including its lack of research and evidence capability (Cabinet Office 2007).

The CASE programme was a direct response to this recommendation, and its remit was thus shaped by a need to provide evidence of the beneficial impacts of existing public spending on culture,

rather than, say, a set of policy proposals for enhancing well-being via cultural means. The use of well-being to translate cultural participation into financial figures for use in cost-benefit analysis represented the latest stage in DCMS's attempts to grapple with the value of culture following the debates over intrinsic and instrumental values that dominated cultural-policy discussions in the 2000s. However, as is often the case with income compensation figures, the results somewhat undermined the seriousness of what was being attempted.

Since that time, after the change of government in the 2010 election and the constraints on public spending that followed the global financial crisis, the CASE programme has been transformed from a longer-term research programme to a more reactive series of research projects. The initial aim for CASE was both to develop research capacity and to generate empirical data useful for cross-Whitehall working, specifically with the Finance Ministry as part of spending reviews. The most recent work from CASE has been a smaller-scale series of research projects driven by specific ministerial concerns, such as fundraising or increasing volunteering (CASE 2011a; 2011b), along with attempts to reinvigorate the very low take-up of the initial CASE findings on drivers, impacts, and values.

The transformation of CASE reflects both a changed status of research within the current administration and a broader capacity issue as government departments cut staff.

Culture and the Problems of Well-being

This brief account of the career of well-being as policy thread within UK cultural policy leaves us with a series of questions about the role of well-being as a driver of public policy in general and some specific questions about its appropriateness for cultural policy in particular.

The first question regards the seeming inability of well-being as a notion in public policy ever to get beyond debates about the measurement of well-being. This traps it in a technocratic discourse that on the one hand leaves it rather vulnerable – as the CASE example shows – and on the other seems not to promote any fuller discussion of what policies might actually promote well-being.

The irony of this is that in the UK at least, the promise of well-being for cultural policy-makers was that it would enable them to move beyond the “box-ticking” that was seen by some to characterize instrumentalism. Jowell’s essay wrestled with this in what might be regarded as classic New Labour terms in that it did not allow for the possibility of contradiction among multiple goals.

As a Culture Department we still have to deliver the utilitarian agenda, and the measures of instrumentality that this implies, but we must acknowledge that in supporting culture we are doing more than that, and in doing more than that must find ways of expressing it. (Jowell 2004, 10)

As this fails to acknowledge, however, both the act of measuring and the outcome of measuring shape what kinds of policies are undertaken in the first place; “doing more” or “moving beyond” measurement cannot simply be decoupled from its findings.

Second, the policy implications of well-being findings are stark. Not only are there indications that employment and health are the essential determinants of well-being (CASE 2010), suggesting that policies to promote full employment, rather than, say, arts education, are the logical conclusions of the well-being agenda, but also levels of well-being are highly unevenly distributed (ONS 2012). According to Blanchflower and Oswald, happiness is U-shaped throughout a person’s lifespan; higher among those who are women; higher among whites, the highly educated, full-time workers, married people, and those on a high income (Blanchflower and Oswald 2011, 6).

There appear to be well-being benefits from cultural participation, but they remain captured by those healthy, happy, and educated enough to participate in them in the first place.

Similarly, well-being across the UK is spatially uneven, corresponding to other patterns of social and economic inequality. This has particular implications for cultural policy, which already has a seriously skewed distribution of benefits, both socially, particularly in terms of class, and spatially.

Although participation in what might be termed

“high culture” (opera, ballet, theater) is a minority pursuit in most countries, even a broader conception of culture (to include popular music, film, sport, and so on) displays strong patterns of socially stratified participation in the UK (Bennett et al. 2009). Despite a large increase in overall cultural funding in the New Labour years, and a strongly stated commitment to broadening access, participation, particularly in publicly funded cultural activities, remains dominated by more advantaged social groups (Miles and Sullivan 2010).

There appear to be well-being benefits from cultural participation, but they remain captured by those healthy, happy, and educated enough to participate in them in the first place. More disturbingly, research on activities such as volunteering, which are correlated with well-being benefits, seems to suggest that it is easier to improve the well-being of people who have relatively high levels of well-being to start with (Oakley 2008; BOP 2011).

Concerns about the distribution of benefits could apply to any area of public policy, but there is a third set of concerns, which, if not unique, is particularly pronounced in the cultural sphere. This might be baldly stated as: do we want a cultural life that promotes well-being?

In terms of cultural funding, there is little or no evidence that we have moved beyond measuring well-being to using it to inform decisions.

From the time of Bentham’s famous claim that, “Prejudice apart, the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry” (Bentham 1830, 206), cultural commentators have always been eager to demonstrate that the arts generally offer a more complex experience than simply one of pleasure, and that if poetry is “better” for humans than push-pin, this is in part because the pleasures that it offers are superior, and in part because it gives access to human experiences other than pleasure.

The “compulsion” to be happy is often treated skeptically, particularly in literature. Huxley’s dystopia *Brave New World* famously suggests that the way to make people happy is to make them “love

their servitude” (Huxley 1962, 149). Sara Ahmed, in her book *The Promise of Happiness* (Ahmed 2010) argues for the right of the “troublemaker” to resist the “happiness script,” when that script is devised in an unjust society. Taking Maggie Tulliver from George Eliot’s *Mill on the Floss* (Eliot 1860) as her example, Ahmed relates how Maggie’s desire to speak out about injustice is attributed as the cause of her unhappiness. Her inability to be dutiful, and thus happy, is contrasted with her cousin Lucy, for whom happiness is avoidance of the difficult: “I’ve always been happy,” Lucy says, “I don’t know whether I could bear so much trouble” (quoted in Ahmed 2010, 389).

In terms of cultural funding, there is little or no evidence that we have moved beyond measuring well-being to using it to inform decisions, but the concern must be that rather than enriching cultural policy-making, well-being simply provides another rationale that helps it avoid some of its own central questions.

Although the last thirty years or so have seen the (welcome) subvention or loosening of cultural hierarchies through the destabilization of the boundaries of legitimate and popular culture, the question of aesthetics in cultural policy will not go away (Hesmondhalgh and Pratt 2005). For a while the radical potential of popular “cultural industries” appeared to hold out the promise of a cultural policy that was pluralistic but not afraid to make judgments. The replacement of this with a more economically focused “creative industries” notion, and still later with a notion of creativity allied purely to innovation, appeared to go to great lengths to avoid engaging in questions of taste, value, or judgment, though such notions keep anxiously reasserting themselves under the guise of “cultural value” and so on. Overall, policy still struggles with clear articulation of what kind of cultural practices should be supported outside of the market, and why.

The fluid definitions of both culture and well-being that exist in much policy discourse often seem to exacerbate this problem. Documents on “culture and well-being,” whether produced by local governments or national funding agencies, tend to provide definitions of culture that veer away from the arts toward the anthropological (Mills and Brown 2004; Lambeth 2010). It is difficult in these documents to see what is specific about the

contribution that the arts can make, and indeed it may be that any form of social participation can help raise well-being. In that case, arts advocates are left struggling to identify their own particular contribution, particularly in art forms that are viewed as more challenging or more solitary.

Conclusions

It is not the aim of this short paper to suggest that participation in cultural activities cannot improve well-being, nor that policy-makers and arts advocates should cease to investigate potential links between the two. But it is far from an unproblematic relationship, and even a cursory examination of the area suggests some of the concerns that may arise when well-being discourse is translated into public policy.

Despite the global economic crisis, Western governments continue to evince interest in the measurement of well-being, but acting upon its implications is regarded as politically unthinkable, whether in terms of full employment, increased spending on public services, or reductions in inequality. Arts advocates – generally keener to embrace new rationales for public support than they are to rigorously examine them – have seen well-being policy as a cause to be rallied around, at least as far as it seems to suggest the potential for increased cultural funding.

Yet the way in which well-being has been taken up in the UK has been dominated by an emphasis on measurement and the need to provide evidence of the perceived effectiveness of existing public spending, rather than to suggest new “well-being-friendly” cultural policies. This paper further suggests that even if this were to be the case, two further problems may arise. First, the current skewing of cultural spending toward the better off is unlikely to be addressed, as the evidence suggests that it is easier to improve the well-being of people who have relatively high levels of well-being to start with, and well-being is correlated with wealth, educational levels, and health (BOP 2011; Blanchflower and Oswald 2011). A cultural policy aimed at raising individual well-being through participation therefore is likely to exacerbate the current inequalities of cultural spending. Second, we need to question the kind of culture that might result from a well-being-influenced policy and

particularly the degree to which it might veer away from cultural activities viewed as difficult, upsetting, challenging, or simply solitary.

It may be that well-being as a policy goal holds out the possibility of progressive policies that concern themselves with goals beyond economic growth and utility maximization, but the use of well-being within UK cultural policy has so far proved rather inadequate to that task.

Kate Oakley
k.oakley@leeds.ac.uk

Dave O'Brien
dave.obrien1@city.ac.uk

David Lee
d.j.lee@leeds.ac.uk

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The Applicability of the Self-fulfillment Account of Welfare to Nonhuman Animals, Babies, and Mentally Disabled Humans

Tatjana Visak and Jonathan Balcombe

The latest and arguably most promising philosophical account of welfare is Daniel Haybron's self-fulfillment account (Haybron 2008). Roughly, according to Haybron, welfare consists of three aspects: (1) emotional flourishing, (2) success in identity-related projects, and (3) the fulfillment of the individual's sub-personal nature. The latter refers to aspects of her nature that are not related to her personal idiosyncrasies or her "self." Haybron mentions health, vitality, and bodily pleasure in this regard, since these things, according to Haybron, benefit us simply because of the sort of creature we are. So, strictly speaking, only emotional flourishing and success in identity-related projects are aspects of self-fulfillment. However, the focus on self-fulfillment distinguishes Haybron's account of welfare from better-known varieties of eudaimonism, which define welfare in terms of nature-fulfillment. These other forms of eudaimonism do not focus on the individual and its idiosyncrasies at all. They are perfectionist and externalist, rather than nonperfectionist and internalist.

The self-fulfillment account of welfare has never, to our knowledge, been tested with regard to the virtue of generality, which is one of the four cardinal virtues for theories of welfare that L.W. Sumner famously introduced (Sumner 1996, 14). The virtue of generality holds that a theory of welfare should be applicable to all beings with welfare:

We make welfare assessments . . . concerning a wide variety of subjects. Besides the paradigm case of adult human persons, our welfare vocabulary applies just as readily to children and infants, and to many non-human beings. It is

perfectly natural for me to say that my cat is doing well, that having an ear infection is bad for her, that she has benefited from a change of diet, and so on. In making these judgments it certainly seems to me that I am applying exactly the same concept of welfare to my cat that I habitually apply to my friends. A theory of welfare will therefore . . . be incomplete if it covers only them and ignores her. (14)

In this paper we will argue that generality is a virtue of Haybron's account of welfare. Indeed, reflecting on the applicability of his theory to nonhuman animals will give us a better understanding of its applicability to humans. We will first focus on self-fulfillment and suggest an interpretation of Haybron's account according to which the self-fulfillment of an individual consists in the fulfillment of the aspects of the self that are applicable to that particular individual. This makes Haybron's account of welfare applicable to all sentient beings. Then we will focus on sub-personal nature-fulfillment and argue that the same interpretation leads to the conclusion that Haybron's account of welfare recognizes even nonsentient beings as welfare subjects. We suggest a way of avoiding this latter conclusion.

The Animal's Self

According to Haybron, happiness, which he conceives of as emotional flourishing, is part of self-fulfillment, because it concerns the fulfillment of the individual's emotional nature, or – more precisely – her emotional self. After all, as Haybron puts it: "[H]appiness bears a special relation to the

self: the facts about what makes us (authentically) happy partially define who we are, our selves” (Haybron 2008, 178). According to Haybron, an individual’s emotional flourishing encompasses her emotions, moods, and mood propensities, where the latter are inclinations to be in a certain mood. So, like hedonism, Haybron conceives of happiness in terms of mental states, broadly conceived. However, unlike hedonism, the mental states that Haybron considers relevant for happiness are not simply pleasant or unpleasant experiences, but rather emotions, moods, and mood propensities.¹

There is broad consensus that mammals and birds, at least, experience pleasure and pain (Rollin 1991; Panksepp 2004, 303-07; Balcombe 2006), and growing agreement that these capacities extend to all vertebrates (Stoskopf 1994; Braithwaite 2010) and perhaps beyond (Sherwin 2001; Elwood 2011). More broadly, they seem to experience enjoyment and suffering. For example, rough-and-tumble play in rats has been shown to raise their levels of the “pleasure hormone” dopamine (Siviy et al. 1996), and experienced rats will hurry to the hand of a trusted human to be tickled, which induces high levels of ultrasonic chirps associated in other contexts with positive affect (Burgdorf and Panksepp 2001; Panksepp and Burgdorf 2003). Chickens inflicted with joint pain prefer water adulterated with an analgesic, switching to pure water when their pain subsides (Danbury et al. 2000). And the degree of cage-impoverishment in captive mice and rats correlates to their self-administration of an anxiolytic drug (Sherwin and Olsson 2004), or amphetamines, respectively (Bardo et al. 2001), presumably because these substances provide relief from negative affective states (for example, anxiety, frustration), as they do for humans. It is a common practice, therefore, to apply hedonistic accounts of welfare to nonhuman animals.

However, do nonhuman animals also experience the deeper emotions, moods, and mood propensities that Haybron’s emotional-state account of happiness refers to? Can these animals be truly happy or unhappy in that sense? Studies with rats and with starlings have documented pessimistic response biases when the subjects are subjected to days of unstimulating confinement, and more optimistic biases by conspecifics kept in enriched environments

(Harding et al. 2004; Bateson and Matheson 2007; Matheson et al. 2008). Persecuted chimpanzees and elephants are vulnerable to psychological breakdown (Bradshaw et al. 2005; Brüne et al. 2006), and baboon mothers whose infants have died show patterns of hormone changes that parallel those of bereaved women, and they seek therapy by expanding their social (grooming) networks (Engh et al. 2006). Few animal studies have sought to address pleasure, let alone happiness, but there are numerous accounts of animals showing joyous affect in such circumstances as play, mischief, liberation, and even humor (see Balcombe 2006). Moreover, capacities for such negative moods as bereavement, depression, and pessimism suggest that positive moods are also present. It can always be questioned where the line ought to be drawn dividing highly sentient from less- or nonsentient animals (Wise 2002). It is not a static line, and as the above-cited examples illustrate, new information has so far been expanding the inclusion zone.

There is broad consensus that mammals and birds, at least, experience pleasure and pain, and growing agreement that these capacities extend to all vertebrates and perhaps beyond.

Haybron conceives of emotional nature, that is, one’s disposition to be happy in certain circumstances and not in others, as an aspect of the self, next to other aspects, such as (1) the individual’s social identity, which concerns her social role and how others see her; (2) the individual’s character, which concerns morally or ethically relevant aspects of the individual; (3) the individual’s temperament, for instance whether she is generally cheerful, extroverted, depressed, and so on; and (4) the individual’s self-understanding, which refers to her understanding of her life, ideals, projects, and relationships (Haybron 2008, 184). These aspects of the self bear on what makes the individual happy and on the individual’s identity-related projects. So, let us explore to what extent these aspects of the self are applicable to nonhuman animals.

It seems that at least some animals, notably

social animals, do have a social identity and projects that are related to that identity. Animals' roles are nuanced and dynamic, varying across social, temporal, and geographical axes. Most temperate-zone songbirds, for instance, have a nonbreeding season on their southerly wintering grounds, a period of migration, a reproductive season in the north, followed by a return migration during the autumn. Reproduction alone encompasses many projects, including courting, mating, nest-building, incubation, food provisioning, and in many cases territory maintenance. In some bird species, breeding pairs are helped at the nest by nonbreeders, who may include a prior year's offspring, unrelated conspecifics, or in at least one species, grandparents (Skutch and Gardner 1999; Richardson et al. 2007). These sorts of roles form an individual's social identity. Furthermore, these roles are fluid; nest-helpers, for instance, may suddenly find themselves in the role of parent should a primary parent be lost (Blackmore and Heinsohn 2007).

One might object that the social roles of animals, as opposed to humans, are not expressions of individual idiosyncrasies, and thus are not really aspects of the individual's self-fulfillment. For both humans and nonhumans it is hard to determine which aspects of our social roles are expressions of individual idiosyncrasies and which are expressions of our sub-personal nature-fulfillment. For instance, in some respects my being a mother may be an expression of my sub-personal nature-fulfillment. In other respects, my particular way of fulfilling that role may be an aspect of my self-fulfillment. In the fulfillment of social roles of humans and nonhumans, both self-fulfillment and nature-fulfillment may be present to varying degrees.

Do animals possess a moral character? The idea that animals might possess any degree of moral character was dismissed until recently, and remains controversial. However, social living fosters many forms of virtuous behavior, for which there are robust adaptive foundations, most notably kin-selection and reciprocal altruism. When you live among and co-depend upon others of your kind, it behooves you to show consideration for others. Cooperation, nurturance, consideration, and empathy are widespread animal behaviors (De Waal 1996; Bekoff and Pierce 2010). That these behaviors are accompanied by positive emotions is informed

by studies in which animals show a negative response to unfair treatment. Studies in which two monkeys alternately exchange tokens for a slice of cucumber from a human experimenter, or in which two dogs offer a paw for a handshake, proceed smoothly through many trials if the exchange is equitable. But if one monkey starts receiving a preferred grape, the other will no longer accept cucumber (Brosnan and de Waal 2003; video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hbb27GQ_X1I [accessed July 22, 2013]), and if only one of the two dogs receives a treat for a paw-shake, the other stops offering a paw much sooner than if both, or none, are given treats (Range et al. 2009).

The idea that animals might possess any degree of moral character was dismissed until recently, and remains controversial.

Do animals have temperaments? Research on temperaments of individual animals, also called "personalities" or "coping styles," shows, for instance, that individual sticklebacks differ consistently across time and contexts as to how shy or bold, explorative or avoiding, active, aggressive, or sociable they are (Bell and Sih 2007). Similar observations have been recorded about the boldness of individual tits (Carere and Van Oers, 2004), the fearfulness, understanding, extroversion, and dominance of individual gorillas (Weiss et al. 2012), and other temperaments of many other animals.

Do animals have self-understanding? Once again, it was believed not so until Gordon Gallop showed that chimpanzees would inspect themselves and notice a mark placed surreptitiously on their forehead when presented with a mirror (Gallop 1970). Subsequently, other great apes, dolphins, elephants, and magpies have passed the mirror self-recognition test, and at least one study provides evidence for it in monkeys (Rajala et al. 2010). It should be added that failure to pass a mirror self-recognition test may not indicate a lack of a sense of self in a nonhuman animal. Related capacities include theory of mind – the ability to attribute mental states to oneself and others – and metacognition, an awareness of one's own

knowledge. Evidence for both of these abilities has been garnered for nonhumans (for example, Foote and Crystal 2007; Horowitz 2009).

It holds for humans and for nonhuman animals that different aspects of the self are applicable to any particular individual to a particular degree, or not at all, depending on her species and on her level and stage of development. For instance, it seems odd to talk about the moral character of a newborn human baby. The self-understanding of a particular mentally disabled human can be very limited. Denying that the baby or the mentally disabled human are subjects of welfare, however, would not only reflect very badly on the theory's generality. It would also severely diminish the theory's fidelity, which is a different but related cardinal virtue of accounts of welfare that Sumner distinguishes. It says that the account should correspond to the concept of welfare, as commonly understood, rather than talking about something completely different.

The self-fulfillment theory of welfare may account for these cases in the following way: We suggest that if aspects of the self are not applicable to any particular individual, they are not part of her welfare. Thus, these aspects may be left out of consideration. The fulfillment of all aspects of the self that are applicable to any particular individual, in turn, accounts for that individual's welfare. In that way, it seems that Haybron's self-fulfillment account of welfare can live up to the virtue of generality: It can "cover all core cases" and "provide a principled resolution of the peripheral cases" (Sumner 1996, 18). The cases where we doubt whether any aspect of the self applies are typically the cases where we doubt whether the being can be affected in her welfare and thus whether the concept of welfare applies. Nevertheless, we should always be cautious before striking an animal off the welfare list. Clams, for instance, are in the same phylum as cephalopod mollusks (octopi and squids), at least one member of which has been deemed worthy of protection under animal welfare law (Animals Scientific Procedures Act 1986).

A noteworthy implication of this interpretation of Haybron's account of welfare is that losing the potential for a certain aspect of self-fulfillment does not in itself count as harmful for the individual. After all, the individual's welfare would simply be assessed on the basis of the aspects that were still

available. If the individual could not be considered the same individual anymore, in a relevant sense, the loss would be considered harmful, though, because it would deprive the individual of all her future welfare.

Animal Nature

The third aspect of welfare, which Haybron more tentatively suggests including, is the fulfillment of the individual's sub-personal nature. According to Haybron, how well off an individual is may depend not only on the extent to which the individual fulfills her emotional self and succeeds in her identity-related projects. It may also depend on how the individual fares with regard to some other aspects that do not concern her personality. What Haybron has in mind here are criteria such as health, vitality, and physical pleasure. What is healthful for an individual, according to Haybron, does not depend on her personality. It is simply determined by the sort of creature the individual is. His idea is, for instance, that exercise is healthful for humans, simply because of the sort of beings we humans have evolved to be. Haybron refers to these aspects of our natures as our "nutritive" or "animal natures," indicating that certain things are good for us simply because of the sort of animal we are.

This aspect of Haybron's account of welfare can straightforwardly be applied to nonhuman animals. Theories of animal welfare typically include the criterion that animals are better off to the extent that they can live according to their species-specific nature (Webster 1994; Ohl and Van der Staay 2011). For instance, since the pig evolved as a terrestrial forager, living on an earthen substrate contributes to her flourishing, and it is part of the volant bird's nature-fulfillment to fly. Indeed, with regard to nonhuman animals, concern with their welfare has focused nearly exclusively on sub-personal nature-fulfillment. There has been very little attention to individual idiosyncrasies and self-fulfillment, properly speaking. Only recently, and mainly with regard to pets, individual idiosyncrasies are being mentioned in relation to animal welfare (Yeates 2013).

What are the implications for the generality of Haybron's account of welfare? Physical pleasure, health, and vitality are applicable to all animals,

including humans at various stages and levels of development. Physical pleasure does not apply to nonsentient beings. However, health and vitality are applicable to nonsentient individuals as well. It is conceivable to speak about the health and vitality of a nonsentient embryo and fetus, the health and vitality of a bug or spider, and the (assumably poor) health and vitality of a permanently comatose patient. Furthermore, one may even speak about the health and vitality of plants. Thus, our above proposal concerning the applicability of Haybron's account to a wide range of welfare subjects – which is to ignore the aspects of welfare that are not applicable to any particular individual – leads to the conclusion that Haybron's account of welfare is applicable to trees, bugs, embryos, or comatose patients. To the extent that at least some of the aspects of welfare apply to any particular individual, this individual is, according to that interpretation, a subject of welfare.

Vitality and health may count toward an individual's welfare only to the extent that they affect the individual's emotional flourishing or her success in fulfilling her identity-related projects.

We are not sure whether Haybron would happily embrace this implication, which certainly deviates from many prominent accounts of welfare, in particular subjectivist accounts such as hedonism and preferentialism. Many consider welfare as inherently subjective. For instance, Sumner explains that welfare literally takes the point of view of the subject, so that unless there is something that it is like to be creature x, creature x cannot have welfare (Sumner 1996). On the other hand, Aristotelian eudaimonistic accounts of welfare or objective-list accounts of welfare, with items such as health and vitality on the list, do not exclude nonsentient welfare subjects. Acceptance of nonsentient welfare subjects may also be in line with common-sense psychology. After all, many people normally speak about the (poor) welfare of a comatose patient, about a bug being made worse off by losing a leg, or even about the flourishing of a plant.

Welfare, Self, and Animal Nature

Here is a possible revision of Haybron's account of welfare that avoids the conclusion that nonsentient individuals are subjects of welfare. One may not include the fulfillment of the individual's sub-personal nature as a separate aspect of welfare. Instead, sub-personal nature fulfillment can be included, where relevant, as a part of emotional flourishing and the fulfillment of identity-related projects. To the extent that sub-personal nature-fulfillment does not bear on these two things, it can be left out of the definition of welfare. Vitality and health, for instance, may count toward an individual's welfare only to the extent that they affect the individual's emotional flourishing or her success in fulfilling her identity-related projects. In that sense, only beings that can flourish emotionally or have identity-related projects, and thus only sentient beings, are subjects of welfare. This would deviate from Haybron's current position since he holds that sub-personal nature-fulfillment directly contributes to an individual's welfare. For instance, he considers being healthy good for a person, in and of itself, whether the person desires and enjoys it or not.

It may seem odd to consider health to be only instrumentally valuable for welfare. However, this view of the value of health is in line with hedonist and preferentialist accounts of welfare. If one's ill health does not in any way – neither directly nor indirectly, neither in the short nor the long run – negatively affect one's experienced quality of life, then arguably one's welfare is not negatively affected. This scenario is empirically extremely unlikely, though, and this may explain why the idea that health is not an aspect of welfare seems odd.

Although Haybron currently holds that sub-personal nature-fulfillment counts directly toward welfare, doing away with this assumption may improve his theory in various ways. For instance, contrary to what Haybron suggests, the distinction between self-fulfillment and sub-personal nature-fulfillment cuts across the two other aspects of welfare, namely emotional flourishing and success in identity-related projects. So, positing sub-personal nature-fulfillment as a third aspect of welfare, besides these two, seems not to get things right. Instead, the fulfillment of an individual's sub-personal nature is an important aspect of her

emotional flourishing and of her identity-related projects.

Support for this reading can be found in the following citation where Haybron refers to bears in an analogy for pointing out the limitations of current happiness research:

A further limitation of most research... is the homogeneity of the populations studied. To an Amish farmer or San hunter, or the fisherman on the island mentioned..., the affluent Westerners who mostly get studied may seem to be leading pretty near identical ways of life. If all your subjects live in similar environments, then of course the role of environment in determining happiness is going to seem limited. It is as if one were to run a series of studies on zoo bears and circus bears, find not much difference in well-being between the groups, and conclude that it doesn't matter very much what environment you put bears in.

Here, Haybron seems to suggest that certain environments make bears happier and certain environments make humans happier. If this is true, happiness or emotional flourishing partly consists in nature-fulfillment rather than only in self-fulfillment. Thus, emotional flourishing and nature-fulfillment are not separate aspects of welfare, but the former contributes to the latter.

Welfare, according to Haybron, consists in self-fulfillment, in particular in emotional flourishing and success with regard to identity-related projects.

Another piece of support can be found in Haybron's discussion of the benefits of exposure to natural environments, notably trees, for human welfare. Haybron cites evidence that exposure to nature contributes positively to our emotions, moods, and mood propensities (Haybron 2011). If so, it holds because of the sort of creature we have evolved to be, rather than because of individual idiosyncrasies. Thus, emotional flourishing partly consists in the fulfillment of our sub-personal natures.

Last, Haybron's motivation for studying happiness was evoked by his belief that the people on an island where he spent much of his childhood were leading happier lives than the mainlanders

among whom he usually lived. This, as well, suggests that certain environments and lifestyles seem to enhance our happiness and welfare, simply because of the sort of creature we have evolved to be: the fulfillment of our sub-personal natures contributes significantly to our emotional flourishing rather than being a separate aspect of welfare.

Likewise, what we take physical pleasure in expresses both our sub-personal natures and our individual idiosyncrasies. Haybron lists physical pleasure under sub-personal nature-fulfillment. However, what we take physical pleasure in does not depend only on our sub-personal natures. Even for broccoli – Haybron's example of what humans take pleasure in simply because of the sort of creatures we are – it does not hold that all humans like it. The same is true for other physical "pleasures," such as cold showers, sunbaths, saunas, massages, and various sexual practices. Instead of listing physical pleasures under sub-personal nature-fulfillment, one might conceive of them as an aspect of emotional flourishing.

Conclusion

We have not endorsed here any particular position on the question of what entities should be ascribed welfare. Instead, we have explored the generality of Haybron's account of welfare. After all, in order to point out the implications of the self-fulfillment account of welfare for (welfarist) moral theory and welfare-directed policy-making, one needs to understand what this account entails, and whom it applies to.

Welfare, according to Haybron, consists in self-fulfillment, in particular in emotional flourishing and success with regard to identity-related projects. Haybron distinguishes several aspects of the self that bear on emotional flourishing and identity-related projects. These aspects of the self are applicable to nonhuman animals and to human beings to different degrees or not at all. We suggest an interpretation of Haybron's account of welfare according to which the self-fulfillment of an individual consists in fulfilling the aspects of the self that apply to that particular individual.

This interpretation of the self-fulfillment account of welfare has the virtue of generality. It also has the

virtue of fidelity, because any account of welfare that yielded the conclusion that babies, mentally disabled humans, and animals lack welfare would not seem to be in line with our common understanding of welfare.

Besides self-fulfillment, Haybron tentatively proposes taking on board the fulfillment of the individual's sub-personal nature as a third aspect of welfare. Including this as a separate aspect of welfare implies that nonsentient animals, comatose patients, and arguably even plants are subjects of welfare. If we do not include the fulfillment of the individual's sub-personal nature as a separate aspect of welfare, we avoid the inclusion of nonsentient beings as welfare subjects. This would imply, *contra* Haybron's current position, that sub-personal nature-fulfillment is only instrumentally valuable for welfare.

Tatjana Visak
tatjana.visak@uni-saarland.de

Jonathan Balcombe
jbalcombe@humanesocietyuniversity.org

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Notes:

¹ Although it is clear that emotions and moods are mental states, it is debatable whether Haybron is right in conceiving of mood propensities as mental states too. Arguably, if these concern the likelihood of being in a certain mood, they may not be themselves emotional states, since they are not themselves something that the individual consciously experiences. On the other hand, if mood propensities are not mental states, in the sense of states of the mind, then what are they?

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On Capability and the Good Life: Theoretical Debates and their Practical Implications

Mozaffar Qizilbash

The capability approach was first developed by Amartya Sen in his Tanner Lecture “Equality of What?” (Sen 1980). Canonical statements of the approach were published in the 1980s (for example, Sen 1985). Slightly modified statements were subsequently published in the early 1990s (for example, Sen 1993), with more “mature” versions published in Sen’s *Development as Freedom* and *The Idea of Justice* (Sen 1999; 2009). Over the years, variations of the approach have emerged. In particular, Martha Nussbaum’s version of the approach, which is distinguished by a different title – the “capabilities approach” – has emerged as a distinct view in moral and political theory.

The capability approach is often seen as advancing a distinct view of human well-being. But at the same time it also supports Sen’s claims that welfare is not the exclusive object of value in moral evaluation and that freedom has a value independent of welfare. The freedom to live a life we value and have reason to value – or the opportunity we have to lead a valuable or good life – is, very roughly, our capability. Those interested in alternative views of well-being or of the good life will ask: does this approach provide a distinctive account of what makes a life go well or better, or of human flourishing? If it does, does this view of the good life provide any new insights into public policies and about what governments and others should, or should not, promote? I argue in this paper that even if Sen does not advance a substantive view of the good life in developing his

capability perspective, his theoretical commitments lead him to quite specific policy views. These strongly contrast with those adopted by one contemporary utilitarian: Richard Layard. Although Sen’s views about policy typically overlap with those of others – like Nussbaum – who favor a version of the capability perspective, sometimes variations of the approach can diverge in their policy applications because of theoretical differences.

The Capability Perspective

The capability perspective emerged from an engagement with a variety of different theoretical approaches within philosophy and welfare economics. In both areas it started from a critical attitude to specific notions of welfare in utilitarian thinking, those that see welfare or “utility” in terms of the satisfaction of desires, pleasure, or happiness. In each case, the approach suggests that the metric of “utility” might be distorted in some way. The overworked indentured servant and the undernourished peasant may cut their desires, learn to find pleasure in small mercies, or learn to be happy with their lot. Nonetheless, they suffer from significant deprivations and may be short on opportunities to live lives that are valuable. This “adaptation” (or “small mercies”) objection to “utility”-based analysis suggests that we should be concerned, in evaluating the quality of people’s lives, with the opportunities they have and with what they are able to do or be. And it cautions us

against focusing exclusively on people's level of "utility" understood in certain ways.

Sen's capability approach asks us to include information on capability and functioning in the evaluation of the quality of life and social states more generally. Functioning here refers to states of the person, the various things a person can do and be. Indeed, on this approach lives can be understood as made up of functionings, and well-being is understood as an evaluation of functionings. The capability approach also asks us to consider the capability people have – where this is understood in terms of the collections or n-tuples of functionings from which a person can choose (see, for example, Sen 1993, 31). It asks us to consider the opportunities or range of lives that are open to each of us. If we return to the overworked indentured servant or the undernourished peasant, we need to evaluate their lives understood in terms of functionings and the range of lives open to them. Their desires or pleasures or happiness may enter as considerations – at the level of functionings – but they would only be some of the objects being considered.

Sen's capability approach asks us to include information on capability and functioning in the evaluation of the quality of life and social states more generally.

Although the capability approach emerged from a critique of some utilitarian views of well-being, it also responded to other approaches in philosophy and welfare economics. The most important of these focused on the means to lead a good life. In philosophy, the relevant perspectives focused on either what John Rawls termed "social primary goods" (Rawls 1971) – which are all-purpose means such as income and wealth and the social bases of self-respect – or on resources in the context of the currency of egalitarian justice; in economics the strategies related to evaluations of progress in terms of national income; and in development economics, specifically, they also related to a focus on basic needs. The capability perspective argued that what mattered was the ability to lead good lives. Income,

social primary goods, and the satisfaction of basic needs were necessary for one's ability to do or be, or to achieve various things, but not ends in themselves. In particular, given the different rates at which people transform income or social primary goods into the stuff of good lives or opportunities, the capability perspective asks us to consider these transformation rates in making interpersonal comparisons of well-being and the quality of life.

The capability approach – in Sen's hands – goes further and distinguishes between those goals that are self-interested and those that go beyond self-interest; agency goals encompass both. It distinguishes between the freedom to achieve well-being (well-being freedom) and well-being achievement; and it distinguishes between agency achievement and the freedom to achieve agency goals (agency freedom). So the capability approach is not simply concerned with the achievement of well-being or even the ability or freedom to achieve it. This aspect of Sen's vocabulary has attracted criticism from one of the adherents of the approach: Martha Nussbaum has been critical of these distinctions and does not use them in developing her own views (Nussbaum 2011, 197–201). But the vocabulary of capability and functionings and the desire to avoid the pitfalls of other approaches is common to both Sen and Nussbaum. The area of overlap between their views can be seen as a core of the approach, which is advanced by its diverse advocates.

Commitments and Uses of the Capability Approach

If the capability approach is understood as merely advancing arguments that suggest that one should look at the beings and doings that constitute (valuable) human lives and people's ability or opportunity to lead good lives, it lacks content. Put another way, it provides us with no answer to the question of what the good life consists in. Sen's desire not to offer much by way of an answer to this question was the subject of criticism in early discussions of his work on the capability approach (for example, Nussbaum 1988). In statements of the approach in the 1990s (for example, Sen 1992 and 1993), he continued to avoid further filling out a picture of what a good life might consist in. However, there are other commitments in his

canonical statements of the capability approach. Furthermore, it is important to understand why he hesitates and stops short of providing a fuller account of well-being.

Before proceeding further it is helpful to adopt a crude if influential categorization of accounts of the good life. Consider Derek Parfit's categorization in Appendix I of *Reasons and Persons*. Accounts of "what makes a life go best" are there split into: hedonistic theories according to which "what is best for someone is what would make his life happiest"; desire fulfillment theories according to which "what is best for someone is what, throughout his life, would best fulfill his desires"; and objective-list theories according to which "certain things are good or bad for us, whether we want to have the good things, or to avoid the bad things" (Parfit 1984, 493). Among desire-fulfillment - or desire - theories, one can distinguish those that focus on our actual desires from those that are concerned with desires that are in some way informed or rational.

In Sen's writings there are hints that suggest that his view is best understood as either an objective-list, or an informed-desire, theory. First, in his discussions of which functionings are relevant in particular contexts he argues that there might be considerable agreement on some set of functionings that are particularly important (see, for example, Sen 1993, 31 and 43-48). These relate to what he calls "basic capability": the ability to achieve certain crucially important functionings up to some minimally adequate level. He usually lists some of these: the ability to avoid starvation, be minimally adequately nourished, sheltered, healthy, and so on. His reasons for not going much further in filling out a view of the good life are illuminating. Different people have distinct views of the good life, so that they will have different views of which functionings are valuable. At the same time, the approach can be used by different people in different contexts, and he does not wish to restrict those who use it. The first of these considerations is an argument from pluralism about the good life. The second can be understood as a methodological argument about pluralism of the context of application. Neither argument militates against the use of particular accounts of well-being such as an informed-desire view, which lists those things that make a distinctively human life go well or better (for example, Griffin 1986; 1996) or a version of the

objective-list theory (for example, Finnis 1980).

Strategically, the goal is to keep the approach open to people who have different conceptions of the good life, and to people who are interested in applying it in different contexts and times. Both arguments emerge in Sen's explanation (see Sen 1993, 46-49) of his decision not to endorse some particular (substantive) view of the good life - in the way that Nussbaum did in her early statements of the capabilities approach, which articulate a list based on an Aristotelian view of it (Nussbaum 1988; 1990; 1992; 1995a; and 1995b). And that decision opens him up to criticism, since in the absence of some account of valuation, Sen's view is vulnerable to a version of the adaptation objection. In particular, Nussbaum argued that if Sen allows people to advance their own lists, this leaves the process of valuation open to distortion through the influence of local culture and the status quo (Nussbaum 1988). Nussbaum argued that people's values were as corruptible as their desires.

In Sen's writings there are hints that suggest that his view is best understood as either an objective-list, or an informed-desire, theory.

If Sen's account seems somewhat lacking in theoretical commitment or content in this context, there is another way of attempting to gauge where he stands. In the literature on well-being, there are those who follow David Hume in supposing that objects are valued because they are desired. They follow the "taste model." For example, James Griffin claims that the taste model is adopted generally in economics and indeed across the social sciences (Griffin 1991, 45-46). But Sen rejects it outright in a canonical philosophical statement of the capability approach. He writes:

Compare the following statements:

(I) I desire x because x is valuable for me.

(II) x is valuable for me because I desire x.

The former statement is intelligible and cogent in a way that the latter is not. Valuing something is a good reason for desiring it, but desiring something is not an obvious reason for valuing it. (Sen 1985, 190)

My reason for highlighting Sen's position here is that, whatever view one takes of the taste model and

questions about the relationship between desire and valuation, it is a strong view to take in the context of views of well-being. It constitutes a significant theoretical commitment. Sen goes on to claim that desire may nonetheless have an important evidential role, since a person's desires give us some idea of what she values.

It is tempting to think that Sen rejects the desire and happiness views. Nonetheless, Sen's approach is close to those desire views that diverge in important ways from the taste model (Griffin 1986 and 1991). In a crude categorization of the sort Parfit offers, nonetheless, it falls closest to an objective-list theory. Relevant valuable functionings would be constitutive of a good life. But there is an element of interpersonal variation allowed in the functionings people value, and in the weights they attach to different functionings. Sen's capability approach sees both functioning and capability as important; it does not specify the weight given to one rather than the other. In all these ways the approach allows for interpersonal variation in the valuation of lives. This interpersonal variation makes the approach flexible enough for it to be consistent with pluralism about the good life, allowing for people with very different views or conceptions of it. According to Wayne Sumner, it introduces an element of "subjectivity" that distinguishes the capability approach from standard objective-list theories (Sumner 1996, 65–66). Since the adaptation objection may be raised in relation to this element of "subjectivity," it is worth noting that in his recent work, Sen stresses the role of public reasoning and debate in the context of social decision-making and its role in filtering out ill-informed or parochial valuations (which might reflect adaptation to the status quo) (Sen 2009, 242). He also links such public reasoning and scrutiny to objectivity in ethics (122). Sen's views on public reasoning and objectivity supplement his capability perspective, but go beyond the core claims that are endorsed by its adherents.

Understood in this way the capability approach can be, and has been, used in a variety of contexts. In the context of moral and political theory, it potentially offers an alternative to an index of "social primary goods" for the purposes of interpersonal comparisons in the form of a "capability index" based on some list of functionings or some measure of opportunity. But,

of course, that is not the only context in which the capability approach is relevant. One of its most influential applications has been to the area of development, where Sen argued that development should be redefined so that it was not seen as an expansion of income or utility per capita, but of capability (Sen 1984; 1999). This view has profoundly influenced the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which developed the "human development index" (HDI) as well as multidimensional measures of poverty and inequality that attempt to go beyond a narrow focus on income or wealth especially in the context of international comparisons of development. An important point to note is that any list of functionings one might adopt in this context may be quite different from that used in moral or political theory. First, it is likely to be influenced by institutional factors (of the sort that may constrain the work of the UNDP) and data limitations. Furthermore, whereas early applications of the capability approach – like the HDI – do not treat life satisfaction or subjective happiness as dimensions of development, in other applications (such as poverty measurement) they are sometimes invoked because being "happy" is – on Sen's view (see Sen 1993, 37) – treated as a valuable functioning (see, for example, Klasen 2000).

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On this reading of the capability perspective and the different lists that can be used in its application, Nussbaum's "capabilities approach" emerges as one particular application or development of Sen's original formulation of the approach, which diverges from Sen's position at important levels. The divergence is most obvious in Nussbaum's rejection of the well-being/agency distinction. Her insistence on an open-ended list of capabilities is perhaps less important since clearly Sen's approach is compatible with the use of a variety of lists, and his theoretical commitments suggest that his position is closest – in

the context of philosophical debates – to an objective-list view. As he puts it, his “scepticism is about fixing a cemented list of capabilities that is seen as being absolutely complete ... and totally fixed” (Sen 2005, 158) rather than about the use of a list as such.

Nussbaum’s list emerges in two different contexts or forms. In the first, she advances a form of “Aristotelian Social Democracy” where an Aristotelian view of the good life underpins a view of just distribution. Nussbaum’s works on capability from 1988 to about 1995 take this form. Later they endorse a form of political liberalism (Nussbaum 1998; 1999; 2003; 2006; 2011) – where people with divergent views of the good and various moral and metaphysical views can all endorse the ability to live in various ways. When this second version of her approach is fleshed out, it covers certain constitutional guarantees. In particular, it is concerned with guaranteeing a minimum level of each capability on the list. In either of these forms, Nussbaum’s approach makes further commitments of various sorts – such as rejecting any use of a capability index that treats items on her list as “commensurable” in the sense that they can be traded off against one another – which Sen does not make. Indeed, some of the distinct commitments Nussbaum and Sen make are obscured by the (potentially misleading) debate about whether or not to adopt some particular list in applying the theory.

The Relevance of the Capability Approach to Practical Issues

The capability approach has had a considerable impact on public debate and policy. It is worthwhile nonetheless to distinguish those applications that have flowed from the core of the approach – which is common ground between Sen and others who advocate some version of it – from others in which this is not so (so that different versions of the approach can diverge at the policy level). One set of policy-relevant interventions that falls in the first set of applications is the construction of measures of progress, inequality, and poverty, including the HDI. The HDI has been influential for at least two distinct reasons that relate to Sen’s theoretical writings. The first and important motivational point is that income is only a means, valuable to the degree that it helps or enables people to lead better

lives. All those who argue for the approach share this view. Furthermore, although those who adopt some version of the capability approach – including Sen himself (see Sen 2006) – typically note the limitations of the HDI, they agree on its strategic importance in showing the limitations of income per capita as a measure of progress. Even Nussbaum, who rejects the use of any capability index that “commensurates” different capabilities, underlines the strategic importance of the HDI (see Nussbaum 2011, 59).

The HDI emerged from a debate within development economics – and in particular from the observation that some countries had done well in terms of income growth, but failed to improve the quality of life of their people, especially the lot of the poor. A different but related debate emerged in more affluent nations in the 1970s. Richard Easterlin observed that as income increased, people did not necessarily feel any more satisfied with their lives (Easterlin 1980). A vast new literature – across economics and psychology – on well-being and happiness now looks into this and related issues. At the policy level this literature has reached a large audience through a popular work by Richard Layard (2005). I mention Layard’s work in part because its publication and subsequent impact has pushed forward public debate in this area and indeed has led to some clarification of how Sen’s theoretical writings do, or might, apply in the context of particular public debates. This is particularly so because aside from being concerned with happiness, Layard’s text endorses a strong, modern form of utilitarianism that regards maximization of aggregate happiness as the single guiding moral principle.

This theoretical difference between Nussbaum and Sen may lead to rather distinct policy views.

The first point to note is that adopting the capability approach would lead one to be skeptical about judgments of progress that focus singularly on happiness or life satisfaction. The reasons would be the same as those that led Sen to be skeptical about “utility”-based evaluation, which are prominent in Sen’s discussion of happiness and his

response to Layard's book in his *The Idea of Justice* (see Sen 2009, 273–76). The other point Sen made in his earlier philosophical writings on capability and well-being and that he reiterates in *The Idea of Justice* is that “happiness can also be seen to have some evidential interest and pertinence” (276). The capability approach would nonetheless favor multidimensional measures that might include, but would not exclusively focus on, happiness or life satisfaction indices.

The capability approach is also relevant to Layard's proposals regarding disability policy. Layard claims that those who are physically impaired tend to adjust quickly to their impairment, and that their level of happiness is not much affected. The empirical evidence supports Layard: Shane Frederick and George Loewenstein show that even those who have serious impairments (for example, have become paraplegic or quadriplegic as the result of some accident) can achieve surprisingly high levels of happiness (Frederick and Loewenstein 1999, 312). Layard notes that those with certain sorts of mental impairment do not adapt in this way (Layard 2005, 121). For this reason, he argues that public policy should focus on, or prioritize, improving the lot of those with mental rather than physical impairments. Unsurprisingly, this is an area where taking a capability perspective leads one to endorse policies that diverge significantly from Layard's utilitarian proposals (see Nussbaum 2006; and Qizilbash 2009; 2011; 2012 *inter alia*). Sen's writings on capability have consistently cited the disabled as a group whose disadvantages may not be well accounted for by either a “utility” or social-primary-goods or resource calculus. The capability perspective would certainly not downplay the importance of physical impairments on the grounds that people can adapt; a claim which is, borne out in various applications or developments of the approach, including Nussbaum's discussion of this issue in her *Frontiers of Justice* (Nussbaum 2006).

Another area of policy relevance is sustainable development and the protection of other (nonhuman) species. This is an area where different applications or developments of the capability approach might diverge significantly in their practical implications. In particular, Sen's position diverges from Nussbaum's because it invokes the distinction between well-being and agency. In

discussing various works on sustainability, he mentions a variety of influential views, including that advanced by the World Commission on Environment and Development, which famously defined sustainable development in terms of “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Sen 2004, 10). He argues that these views may not take an “adequately broad view of humanity” because they concentrate on maintaining our living standards – which elsewhere he suggests may be thought of in terms of the achievement of, or freedom to achieve, well-being (Sen 1987, 28–29). But clearly on Sen's view, “sustaining living standards is not the same thing as sustaining people's freedom to have – or to safeguard what they value and to which they have reason to attach importance” (Sen 2004, 10). One example Sen gives of this is “our sense of responsibility towards other species.” In developing his views here he stresses that in thinking about the role citizens can play in environmental policy, we must “think of human beings as agents, not merely as patients” (Sen 2004, 11; and 2009, 248–52). Crucial to Sen's views here are the notions of agency freedom and achievement, whereas much of the application of the capability approach in other contexts is about well-being freedom and achievement. In the previous policy contexts I have discussed, there is no significant difference between Sen and Nussbaum. Because of Nussbaum's rejection of the well-being/agency distinction, their proposals about “other species” are, however, quite different. Unlike Sen, Nussbaum introduces “Other Species” in her list of capabilities (more specifically, she includes “being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature”) (Nussbaum 2011, 34). She develops her own view further in her *Frontiers of Justice*. For Sen, by contrast, our concern to protect other species and the environment can be adequately accommodated in the capability perspective only by allowing agency goals that are not self-regarding, and in that sense part of the broader range of values that enter into the notion of a valuable or good life. Such concerns would not obviously enter into the formulation of a list of functionings or capabilities but rather in a different place in moral and political life. This theoretical difference between Nussbaum and Sen may lead to rather distinct policy views. Although

it remains nonetheless possible that advocates of variations of the capability approach, in spite of their theoretical differences, might all endorse the importance of protecting other species, they may do so for very different reasons and in rather different ways.

Conclusions

The core claims embodied in Amartya Sen's capability perspective constitute an approach that has been developed by Sen himself and others, including Martha Nussbaum. In spite of his unwillingness to commit himself to a single list of valued functionings or capabilities of the sort Nussbaum adopts, Sen does make substantive theoretical commitments in developing his approach, so that in any standard classification of views of well-being it is closest to an objective-list view. These theoretical commitments mean that the capability perspective can lead to very different policy recommendations from those that might follow from a utilitarian view. In particular, I have argued that the capability perspective and Richard Layard's utilitarian view lead to rather different recommendations in the context of disability policy. But Sen's and Nussbaum's developments of the capability approach also make different theoretical commitments, which lead to potentially distinct policy views in other contexts, such as the protection of other (nonhuman) species.

Mozaffar Qizilbash
mozaffar.qizilbash@york.ac.uk

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